



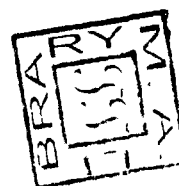
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SHAIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF
THE DEGREE OF**

Doctor of Philosophy

IN

HISTORY



**Under the Supervision of
Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami**

BY

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A B S T R A C T

The Naqshbandi silsilah occupies an important place in the annals of Islam in Indian sub-continent. For nearly two centuries, i.e. 17th and 18th, it was the principal spiritual order in India and its influence permeated far and deep into Indo-Muslim life. Though many Naqshbandi saints came to India and associated themselves with the royal courts of Babur, Humayun and Akbar, the credit of really organizing and propagating the Naqshbandi silsilah in this country goes to Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah. He not only actively strove to popularize Islamic teachings in the masses, but played a significant role in shaping the religious outlook of the ruling class. A new phase in the history of the Naqshbandi silsilah began when Khwaja Baqi Billah reached India from Kabul, his native town.

Baqi Billah's Khalifa and chief successor, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi known as 'Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani' holds a very special and significant position among the Muslim divines of medieval India. He played most important role in disseminating the ideology and practices of the Naqshbandi silsilah in India and Jahangir found his disciples in every city of the Mughal empire. For centuries he has been

considered one of the most outstanding sufi teachers and thinkers of the sub-continent.

Born in 971 A.H./ 1563-4 A.D. in Sirhindi, Shaikh Ahmad Faruqi, a descendant of the second Pius Caliph Umar al-Faruq, grew up to manhood during the reign of Akbar. He was deeply perturbed at the religious experiments of Akbar and left no stone unturned in challenging the situation created by political interference in religious life. He criticised severely the ulama-i-su' (the worldly minded ulama) and challenged the validity of principles of Ijtihad (interpretation of Islamic law), followed at the court. In the beginning of Jahangir's reign he established close contacts with eminent Mughal nobles through correspondence and made them realize the nature of heretical developments at the court. He deputed his disciples and khalifas to spread his spiritual mission in every important city and town of the Mughal empire. A large number of ulamà, sufis, scholars, nobles, civil & military officials, and common people joined his mystic fold. His success was most marked in the reign of Jahangir, when many of the leading nobles at the Mughal court became his devotees. The Shaikh also tried to effect certain religious reforms in the royal army. The emperor, consequently, summoned Shaikh Ahmad in 1029 A.H./ 1619 A.D. to his royal court and ordered his imprisonment in the fort of Gwalior. The saint remained there for about a year. On

his release he spent three years with the imperial army.

As a sufi Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi preached the importance of spiritual values in man's life by reviving people's interest in the Shariat i.e. the laws of Islam. He attacked Shaikh Muliyyiddin Ibn-i-Arabi's Wahdat-ul-Wujud (Unity of Being) by declaring it one of the main causes of weakening the distinctive features of faiths and creating an atmosphere of moral holiday. His chief contribution to the sufi thought in Islam was his enunciation of a counter theory Wahdat-ush-Shahud (Unity of Appearance), and the way he defined mystic concepts pertaining to hal (state) and maqamat (stations). He opposed bid'at (innovation or deviation from the practice of the Prophet of Islam) and declared that no spiritual progress was possible without closely following the path indicated by the Prophet, i.e. sunnah.² All his mystical ideas and practices are closely concerned with the central traditions of Islam. For this reason his contemporaries, both ulama and mashaikh (sufis), accepted Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi as the most important religio-spiritual leader of the Muslims and addressed him with the title of 'Mujaddid-i-Alf-Thani', the renewer of the second millennium of Islam. He continued his mystic activities until his death in 1034 A.H./ 1624 A.D. in Sirhind. Shaikh Ahmad's works especially his letters in three volumes known as Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani hold an

important position in Muslim mystical literature throughout the Islamic world.

Many contemporary and later sources in Arabic and Persian apart, a number of works in English, Urdu and other languages have appeared so far which throw light on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. However, the need of a comprehensive work dealing with all aspects of his life and thought, and his impact on political and mystical life of the period has been a desideratum.¹ The present thesis is an humble attempt to fill this gap. On one hand it contains the complete biographical details of the Shaikh, and on the other it analyses in detail his reaction to Akbar's religious experiments and his role in the Mughal politics. A complete survey has been made here of Shaikh Ahmad's mystical and religious activities. His conception of Tawhid and the theory of tajdeed and millennium have also been thoroughly discussed. The thesis also deals with the initial history of the Naqshbandi silsilah in India and throws light on the life and ideology of Khwaja Baqi Billah. While discussing Shaikh Ahmad's reaction to Akbar's religious experiment and his role in the Mughal political, the religious policy and experiments of emperor Akbar, and the religio-political condition of Jahangir's reign have been discussed in details. Besides, the thesis starts with a critical survey of the milieu in which

the social, political and religious attitudes of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi were shaped.

Accordingly, the thesis comprises an introduction and nine chapters. The first chapter entitled 'milieu' gives the detail accounts of various to religious and socio-political movements of the period and tries to show their positive or negative impact on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. In this connection a brief survey of the Mahdawi Movement, the activities of the Christian missionaries in and outside the Mughal court, increasing influence of Hindu ladies(queens), officials and nobles on Akbar, the activities of the Bhakti saints, and the impact of Abul Fazl and his family on the emperor etc. has been made critically. The second chapter throws light on the early life of the Shaikh whereas the third one gives the details of his joining the mystic fold of Khwaja Baqi Billah into the Naqshbandi order. This chapter also highlights the biographical details and mystical teachings of the Khwaja, and discusses his relations with the Mughal nobles. Chapter four presents Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi as an organizer of the Naqshbandi silsilah in India. In this chapter a complete survey of his khalifas' mystical activities as well as missionary work in different cities of the sub-continent has been made. The fifth chapter dealing with the religious .thought and mystical ideology of the Shaikh thoroughly

discusses Wahdat-ush-Shuhud and the concept of tajdeed and millennium. Chapter six throws light on Shaikh Ahmad's reaction to Akbar's religious experiments, while the seventh chapter discusses the Shaikh's relations with Jahangir and the Mughal nobles. In both these chapters, Ahmad Sirhindi's method of working against Akbar's attitude towards Islam and the Muslims, and influencing the thought and policies of Jahangir apart, policy and experiments of Akbar, and the religio-political condition of Jahangir's reign have been discussed in detail. The eight chapter describes Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's last days and death. Chapter nine, the last one, highlights the impact of the saint on Indo-Muslim mystic ideology. The thesis also consists of a chronology of the Shaikh's life and the bibliography of the select works on both Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, and the social, political and religious condition and personalities of the period.

This study is based a critical survey of the Naqshbandi sources as well as the religio political treatises of the period, particularly the works of Khwaja Baqi Billah, the maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani of Shaikh Ahmad himself, the Zubdat-ul-Muqamat of Khwaja Hashim Kishmi which occupies a place of precedence in the biographical as well other type of literature on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi produced in India, and the works of the Shaikh's sons and the khalifas. We have

benefited from the other chronicles also such as Ain-i-Akbari and Akbar Nama of Abul Fazl, Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh of Abdul Qadir Badayuni, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri of Emperor Jahangir and the Ma'athir-ul-Umara' of Shah Nawaz Khan. Moreover, the ideas and arguments of the modern writers and historians in their works in English and Urdu have been completely noticed.

THESIS SECTION

Dated : 5.1.1991

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that Mr. Iqbal Sabir has completed his research under my supervision. This thesis prepared by him on 'The Life and Times of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi' is his original work and is fit for submission for the award of Ph.D. degree in History.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K.A. Nizami', is written over a long, thin diagonal line that extends from the right side of the signature towards the bottom right of the page.

(Professors K.A. Nizami)
Supervisor

CONTENTS

	Page No.
Preface	
Introduction	1-17
Chapter-I The Milieu	18-75
Chapter-II Birth , Early Life and Education	76-97
Chapter-III Initiation into the Naqshbandi order By Khwaja Baqi Billah	98-137
Chapter-IV As Organizer of the Naqshbandi Silsilah in India	138-170
Chapter-V Religious Thought and Mystical Ideology	171-199
Chapter-VI Reaction to Akbar's Religious Experiments	200-267
Chapter-VII Relation with Jahanqir and the Mughal Nobles	268-312
Chapter-VIII Last Days and Death	313-319
Chapter-IX Impact of Shaikh Ahmad on Indo-Muslim Mystic Ideology.	320-323
Appendix-A Chronology	324-328
Appendix-B Bibliography	329-344

PREFACE

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, popularly known as 'Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani', holds a pre-eminent position in the history of Muslim mystical movement in India. He was the first Muslim saint-scholar of the sub-continent whose thought and movement reached far beyond the Indian frontiers and influenced Muslim scholars and saints in different regions. His spiritual descendants, (Khalifas), zealously participated in the organization of the 'Naqshbandi-mujaddidi' silsilah in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, and Indonesia.

In India, apart from attracting a large number of Muslims to his mystic fold, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi left a deep impact upon the contemporary ulama, sufis and the ruling elite. Jahangir, though a critic of his views and activities in the beginning, developed respectful attitude towards him. Many Mughal nobles joined his mystic discipline and played significant role in changing the atmosphere of the court in accordance with the ideology of Shaikh Ahmad. He stood for strict and close adherence to the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. His concept of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud (Unity of Appearance), changed the entire gamut of Muslim mystical thought and gave a new orientation to Tasawwuf. His works,

particularly the collections of his letters, (Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani), have been a veritable source of religious and spiritual guidance through the centuries. A number of works dealing with his biography, religious thought, mystic ideology, political role and organizational activities have appeared in Arabic, Persian, English and Urdu during last four hundred years.

The present thesis is an attempt to study Shaikh Ahmad's thought and personality in the special context of his time. It provides an analysis of Sirhindi's political role, mystical thought and revivalist as well as organizational efforts. In this connection I consider it my pleasant duty to acknowledge my deep indebtedness to my esteemed supervisor Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, former Chairman and Director of our Department and a renowned scholar of medieval Indian History. It could not have been possible for me to bring this work to completion without his special care, ungrudging help, affectionate guidance and valuable suggestions. He spared his precious time in checking the work and discussing the problems related to it. I feel honour and good fortune by completing my thesis under his inspiring supervision. I find me unable to express my gratitude and obligation to him into words. I have always received a paternal affection and kindness from him. May Allah give him long life so that we,

the seekers of knowledge, may benefit from his inspiring personality and scholarship.

I am also specially indebted to Professor Zameeruddin Siddiqui, Chairman, Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, A.M.U., Aligarh. He has always been compassionate to me and taken much interest in solving my problems. Had he not given me his moral support, it would have been impossible for me to stay and carry on my research work for several years at Aligarh. There are no words with me to express my deep sincerity and thankfulness to him for his generous and kind attitude towards me.

My grateful thanks are due to Professor I.H. Siddiqui whose scholarly advice and suggestions have always been a useful addition in my knowledge. I am also obliged to my uncle Dr. Iqbal Ahmad reader in the English Deptt. of our University for his suggestions to solve my linguistic problem. It is also a matter of great pleasure for me to mention Mr. S. Farrukh Jalali with whom I frequently discussed the various aspects of my research topic. He drew my attention to many interesting points and provided me with valuable information. I am also grateful to the authorities of the Indian Council of Historical Research for awarding me the ICHR Fellowship for one year.

I must not fail to acknowledge the affection and kindness of Dr. M. Iqbal Majaddidi of the M.A.O. College, Lahore (Pakistan), who, from time to time, sent me many original Persian sources and modern works alongwith his own books and articles regarding my Ph.D. topic. Professor Ghulam Mustafa Khan and Prof. M. Masud Ahmad, both of them renowned scholars of Pakistan, also deserve my special thanks. My grateful thanks are also due to my another uncle Professor Saiyid Sakhi Ahmad Hashmi Sandeelvi, former Head of the Deptt. of Urdu, Sindh University, Hyderabad (Pakistan), for supplying the brochures and treatises of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, published in Pakistan, to me.

My deep indebtedness is due to Mr. Jalal Abbas Abbasi, the former Librarian of our Departmental Library and presently an assistant librarian in Maulana Azad Library, for his kind and brotherly attitude towards me throughout the period I have spent in Aligarh. I am also thankful to Mr. M. Yusuf Siddiqui of our Research Library who too treated me as his younger brother and helped and, cooperated with me at every moment.

I shall be guilty if I don't acknowledge the courtsy and kindness of the staff members of the Research Library of our Department. They cooperated with me at every step and

made all books available whenever needed. My thanks are due to all of them. I am also thankful to the whole ministerial as well as administrative staff of our Department. Moreover, the staff of Maulana Azad Library, especially its Persian, Urdu and Manuscripts sections, and the seminar libraries of the Deptts. of Islamic studies and Sunni Theology also deserve to be thanked.

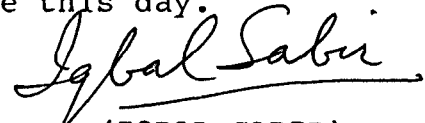
My sincere regards and grateful thanks are due to all my well-wishers and friends, both in and outside Aligarh, for showing their affection, sympathy and help to me during my research work. I am thankful to Mr. Suhail Ahmad who typed this thesis with full cooperation. My thanks are also due to my cousin Mohammed Rishad Faridi for his help during typing days.

It would not be a complete acknowledgment if I don't mention my gratefulness to my parents, particularly my father Mr. Qazi Ghulam Sabir Qadeeri Sadeelvi who eagerly bore all difficulties and problems in this process. Infact it is my father who first of all advised me to undertake research on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, (Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani). I pray to Allah for enabling me to come up to his expectations and serve him whole-heartedly. I am also thankful to my younger sister, a research scholar in Persian in our University, for

her keen interest in the completion of my Ph.D. thesis. I wish her good luck.

Besides, I think it necessary on this occasion to remember and pay homage to my first teacher (late) Qazi Mir Muhammad Jaisi whose scholarly radiating personality has deeply influenced me in my boyhood. The marks of his sacred memory will always encourage me for the acquisition of knowledge. May Allah confer His grace and favours on him in the life hereafter.

Finally, and above all, I must record my deep sense of obligations to Maulana Saiyid Abdur Rasheed Saheb of Karachi, (Late) Maulana Shah Wali Muhammad Saheb Qadeeri Bareilwi and Maulana Saiyid Abdul Qadeer Miyan Saheb Pilibhiti whose blessings and benedictions made me see this day.


(IQBAL SABIR)

Aligarh

Date: 7-/-1991

I N T R O D U C T I O N

INTRODUCTION

The Naqshbandi silsilah¹ occupies an important place in the history of Islam in Indian sub-continent. According to Professor K.A. Nizami for nearly two centuries it was the principal spiritual order in India and its influence permeated far and deep into Indo-Muslim life.² The establishment of the Mughal empire in India provided the followers of the silsilah with an opportunity to introduce their doctrines and practices into this country.³ We know

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1. The Naqshbandi silsilah is an offshoot of the "Silsilah-i-Khwajagan" which was organised in Turkistan by Khwaja Ahmad Ata Yaswi (ob. 1166 A.D.), whom the Turks respectfully refer to as "Hazrat-i-Turkistan". In the fourteenth century, Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband (ob. 1389), a spiritual descendant of Khwaja Ata, revitalized the silsilah and popularized it among the Turks and Mongols of Central Asia and 'Mawara-un-Nahr'. His impact on the silsilah-i-Khwajagan was so great that after his name the silsilah came to be known as Naqshbandi silsilah.
 2. K.A. Nizami, State and Culture in Medieval India, Delhi 1985, p.160.
 3. It is to be pointed out in this connection that the Mughal rulers ever since the time of Amir Timur had been very much devoted to the Naqshbandi silsilah and its saints. Timur built the tomb of Khwaja Ata and paid respectful visits to his shrine. He treated Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband with profound respect. His descendants are reported to have married into the saint's family. They used to receive Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar, a spiritual descendant of Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband, "standing at a distance with their eyes fixed on the ground". They also sometimes referred their internecine conflicts to him for arbitration. Babur also inherited from his father Umar Shaikh Mirza, who was a
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from contemporary sources that many Naqshbandi saints came to India and associated themselves with the royal courts of Babur, Humayun, and Akbar.¹ However, their activities seem to

f.note contd. from prev.

disciple of Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar, a deep regard for the Naqshbandi saints and a feeling of close spiritual affinity with them. (See, State and Culture in Medieval India, p. 161). This tradition prevailed from generation to generation in the Mughal rulers of India as well. Referring to the Naqshbandi influence upon Emperor Aurangzeb, a distinguished Chishti saint of the 17th - 18th century, Shah Kalimullah of Delhi, writes in a letter to one of his Khalifas in the Deccan who is trying in vain to influence the his (Aurangzeb's) religious outlook, "The Emperor of Hindustan is a descendant of Amir Timur and Amir Timur was spiritually attached to Shah-i-Naqshband. These Turanians, all and every one of them, are connected with the Naqshbandi order and they do not attach any value to any other silsilah. "(Maktubat-i-Kalimi, Delhi 1301, p.75). For details see State and Culture in Medieval India, p.160). Moreover, when the age of the Great Mughals was over and the Mughal Empire was nothing more than the phantom of a forgotten glory, another outstanding Naqshbandi saint Shah Waliullah of Delhi exercised great influence on contemporary Mughal rulers and politics. (For his details see, State and Culture in Medieval India PP, 174-76).

- 1. Khwaja Abdush Shahid was the first Naqshbandi saint who came to India and stayed at the court of Emperor Babur who held him in high esteem. For details see Babur Nama, Bombay 1308, p. 229. Badayuni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol. III, Calcutta 1869, p.40; Dara Shukoh, Safinat-ul-Auliya, Kanpur, 1884, p....

Khwaja Abdush Shahid was followed by some other Naqshbandi saints of Central Asia who came to the court of Babur.

Khwaja Khwand Mahmud Shihabuddin, the grandson of Khwaja Obaidullah Ahrar, also is reported to have visited India. But he could not meet Babur at Delhi due to his sudden death before his arrival. The saint

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have been confined to the royal circles. In fact, the real organizer and propagator of the Naqshbandi silsilah in India, was Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah.¹ He not only actively strove to popularize Islamic teachings in the masses, but played significant role in shaping the religious outlook of the ruling class. He left a deep impact upon medieval Indian society and changed completely the mystic environment in the capital.² Professor Nizami says, "A new phase in the history of the Naqshbandi silsilah began when Khwaja Baqi Billah reached India from Kabul".³

Among the Khalifas of Khwaja Baqi Billah, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, commonly known as 'Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani', holds a

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therefore met Humayun who received him with great honour.

Moreover, Emperor Akbar in early years of his reign, was also devoted to the Naqshbandi saints and paid great respect to them. He accorded a warm welcome to Khwaja Shahid when he reached India from Samargand in 967/1559-60. For details see, State and Culture in Medieval India, p. 162.

1. J. Spencer Trimingham, Sufi Orders in Islam, London 1971, p.94.
2. K.A. Nizami, Hayat-i-Shaikh Abdual Haq Muhadith Dehlawai, Delhi 1964, p. 138.
Also, Shaikh Muhammad Ikram, Rud-i-Kausar, Delhi. 1987 (reprint) pp. 202-3.
3. State and Culture in Medieval India, p. 163.

very special and significant position. He played an important role in disseminating the ideology and practices of the Naqshbandi silsilah in this country, and Jahāngir found his disciples in every city of the Mughal empire.¹ For centuries he has been considered one of the most outstanding sufi teachers and thinkers of India.²

Born in 971 A.H./1563-4 A.D. in Sirhind³, Shaikh Ahmad Faruqi grew up to manhood during the reign of Akbar. He was deeply perturbed at the religious experiments of Akbar and left no stone unturned in challenging the situation created by political inference in religious life. He criticised severely the ulama-i-su (the worldly minded ulama) and challenged the validity of principles of Ijtihad, (interpretation of Islamic law), followed at the court. In the beginning of Jahangir's reign he established close contacts with eminent Mughal noble through correspondence and made them realize the nature of heretical developments at the

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1. Tuzuk-i-jahangiri, Aligarh, 1864, p.272.
 2. For details see Abul Kalam Azad, Tazkira, Delhi (Sahitya Academy), 1968, pp.263-64.
Sir Muhammad Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Lahore, 1974, pp.192-93.
 3. Now a famous town in the modern Patiala district of Punjab. For the historical background of this town see, Fauja Singh, ed. Sirhind Through the Ages, Patiala, 1972.

court. He deputed his disciples and Khalifas to spread his spiritual mission in every important city and town of the Mughal empire. A large number of ulama, sufis, scholars, nobles, civil and military officials, and common people joined his mystic fold. His success was most marked in the reign of Jahangir, when many of the leading nobles at the Mughal Court became his devotees. The Shaikh also tried to effect certain religious reforms in the royal army. The emperor, consequently, summoned Shaikh Ahmad in 1029 A.H./ 1619 A.D. to his royal court and ordered his imprisonment in the fort of Gwalior. The saint remained there for about a year. On his release he spent three years with the Imperial army.

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Prophet) and declared that no spiritual progress was possible without closely following the path indicated by the Prophet, i.e. Sunnah. All his mystical ideas and practices are closely concerned with the central traditions of Islam. For this reason, his contemporaries, both ulama and sufis, accepted Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi as the most important religio-spiritual leader of the Muslims and addressed him with the title of Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, the renewer of the second millennium of Islam.¹ He passed the concluding years of his life at Sirhind where he continued his sufi activities until his death in 1034 A.H./ 1624 A.D.²

A number of works have appeared on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi during four hundred years. The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat of Khwaja Hashim Kishmi and the Hazarat-ul-Quds of Mulla Badruddin Sirhind deserve special mention in this regard. The former, work appeared within three years of Shaikh Ahmad's death whereas the Hazarat-ul-Quds was completed in 1052/1642. The authors of both these works owed spiritual allegiance to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Since then a number of Muslim and

1. As such Ahmad Sirhindi also occupies a pre-eminent position in the annals of Islam mysticism. He has equally been popular outside the Indian frontier. His letters (maktubat) have been translated into the Arabic and Turkish languages.
2. See Appendix 'A'.

non-Muslim authors have produced works - books and articles - in different languages on various aspects of his life, thought, spiritual experiences and practices, and his contribution to the Mughal politics. In modern time the works of Professor K.A. Nizami, Shaikh Muhammad Ikram, Ghulam Mustafa Khan, Zaid Abul Hasan Faruqi, Manzoor Nu'mani, Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, Muhammad Masu'd Ahmad, Muhammad Farman, Shah Zawwar Husain, Yohanan Friedmann and Athar Abbas Rizvi have attracted the notice of scholars on this theme. Besides, there are other works also in English and Urdu which throw some light on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. However, the need of a comprehensive work dealing with all aspects of his life and thought, and his impact on political and mystical life of the period has been a desideratum. This work is an humble attempt to fill this gap. On one hand it contains the complete biographical details of the Shaikh and on the other it analyses in detail his reaction to Akbar's religious experiments and his role in the Mughal politics. A complete survey has been made here of Shaikh Ahmad's mystical and religious activities. His conception of Tawhid and the theory of tajdeed and millennium have also been thoroughly discussed. The thesis also deals with the initial history of the Naqshbandi silsilah in India and throws light on the life and ideology of Khwaja Baqi Billah, the spiritual preceptor

of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. While discussing Shaikh Ahmad's reaction to Akbar religious experiments and his role in Mughal politics, the religious policy and experiments of Emperor Akbar and the religio - political condition of Jahangir's reign have been discussed in details. Besides, the thesis starts with a critical survey of the milieu in which the social, political and religious attitude of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi were shaped.

This study is based on a critical study of the Naqshbandi sources as well as the religio-political treatises of the period. So far as the teachings and ideology of Khwaja Baqi Billah are concerned, his letters, (maktubat), conversations, (malfuzat), and poetic verses, (in the form of rubaiyat and mathnawi), have been our main source of information.¹ As Baqi Billah's mystic thought played a significant role in Sirhindi's ideological development, these works are of great value and provide an insight into the Naqshbandi spiritual process. Besides, through these sources, especially the letters of the Khwaja, we are also informed of the religious ferment of Akbar's time. These also reveal Baqi

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1. Khwaja Baqi Billah's letters, malfuzat and poetic verses have been published in a collected form, known as Kulliyat-i-Khwaja Baqi Billah, with an introduction by Zaid Abul Hasan Faruqi, from Lahore in 1968.

Billah's dissatisfaction with the general condition of those days. These letters and malfuzat incidentally reflect Shaikh Ahmad's developing image in the eyes of his pir and present him as a great future personality.¹

The most important source for the thought of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is his collection of letters. He wrote numerous letters to his contemporary ulama, sufis, nobles, and others. He even addressed the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. These letters, known as Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani hold an important position in Muslim mystical literature. The maktubat provide lot of information on religious, mystical, social and political themes. Professor Shaikh Abdur Rashid says that the letters of 'Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani' cover a vast field ranging from the technology and metaphysics to politics and missionary activities. According to him these letters are a mirror of the intellectual and spiritual ferment which swept over the spritually saturated Indian Muslim Society.² These maktubat form a very important source of Indian History and reflect the socio-political environment of Akbar and Jahangir's reign. These also shed a flood of

1. Ibid., p.130.

2. CH. Philips, ed. "Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylone", London 1961, p. 132

light on the revivalist efforts of the Shaikh¹ and his followers and disciples primarily on mystical subjects.² Inshort these letters are inseparably related to the circumstances in which these were written. Moreover, these letters reveal the Shaikh's powerful exposition of his ideas.

These letters run into three volumes. The first volume of the maktubat, entitled Durr-ul Maarifat, was compiled by Shaikh³ Yar Muhammad Jadid Badakhshi in 1025 A.H. / 1616 A.D. It contains 313 letters. The second volume, Nur-ul-Khalaig, was compiled by Khwaja Abdul Haiy in 1028 A.H. / 1619 A.D. and comprises 99 letters. The third volume known as Maarifat-ul-Haqaiq, consisting of 114 letters, was compiled by the author of Zubdat-ul-Maqamat in 1033 A.H./ 1623 A.D.³

1. Zawwar Hussain, Hazrat Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, Karachi, 1975, p. 683
2. Murtuza Hasan, Letters of Shaikh Ahmad (A New Source of Historical Study), "The Proceedings of the Indian History Congress", Partna Session, 1946, p.274.
3. Besides, the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani have frequently been published, from Lucknow, (Nawal Kishore), in 1877; Delhi, (Matba-i-Ahmadi), 1871 and (Matba-i-Mutadawai), 1873, Amritsar, 1916; Lahore, 1964; and Istanbul, (Turkey), 1977 which has been utilized in the present thesis.

Moreover, the following works - brochures and treatises - of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi have also been utilized here. Ithbat-un-Nabuwwah¹, in Arabic, presents the familiar arguments to prove the necessity of prophecy in general and the Prophecy of Muhammad (Peace and blessing be upon him) in particular. It also contains Ahmad Sirhindi's views of the situation of Islam in India during the reign of Akbar.² The brochure is reported to have been produced in 990-1 A.H. / 1582-3 A.D. at Agara.³

Risalah-i-Radd-i-Rawafiz,⁴ persian treatise, written in 1002 A.H./ 1593-4 A.D.,⁵ in refutation of Shias and their religion beliefs, discusses the greatness and importance of Khulafa-i-Thalatha, first three Caliphs - viz. Abu Bakr Siddiq (Ob. 13 A.H. / 634 A.D.), Umar al-Faruq (Ob. 24 A.H. / 645 A.D.) and Usman-al-Ghani (ob. 35 A.H. / 6565 A.D.)⁶, and prove the superiority of Abu-Bakr over all the companions of

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1. Published from Karachi 1383 A.H. Lahore 1385 A.H.
 2. Yohanan Friedmann, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, MacGil, 1971, p. 5.
 3. Zawwar Husain, op. cit, pp. 676-77.
 4. Published from Rampur 1384 A.H. / 1964 A.D. Lahore 1964 A.D.
 5. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p. 131.
 6. Shah Waliullah has thoroughly discussed the pious Caliph's significance and greatness in Islamic History and beliefs. See, Izalat-ul-Khifaun Khilafat-il-Khulafa (Urdu Translation), Vol I, Karachi, n.d. pp. 585-616.

the Holy Prophet.¹ It throws light on different groups of Shias, such as Bayana, Mughira, Hanahiya, Mansuriya, Khilabiya, Gharalia, Zimmiya, Yunusiya, Mafuzia, Batiniya, Zaidiya, Imamiya, Kamiliya and Ismailiya, and describes their religions ideology.² It also highlights Ibn-i-Saba's hypocritical attitude towards Islam and Ali, the fourth pious Caliph,³ and described the early history of the Shias in India. One can easily know as to how the Shia influence was increasing in Akbar's court. Shah Waliullah is said to have written a commentary on this work.⁴

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1. For detailed study in this connection see, Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol. I, letter 59 and Vol II, Letter 36 Saeed Ahmad Akbarabadi, Siddiq-i-Akbar, Delhi 1957 A.D., p. 131. S. Muinul Haqq, 'Hazarat Abu Bakr, Lahore, 1947, pp. 225-31.
 2. Ibn-i-Khaldun also gives a detailed description of these sorts of Shias. See groups, Mugaddemah Ibn-i-Khaldoon (Urdu Translation), Karachi, pp. 225-31.
 3. In this connection the following works may also be consulted for a detailed study.
Shah Abdul Aziz, Tuhfa-i-Asna-i-Ashriya, (Matba-i-Ahmadi), Delhi 1266 A.H., pp. 205-211/ S.A. Rahim, ed. Fitna-i-Ibn-i-Saba, Multan 1372/ (Maulana) Muhammad Ali, Early Caliphate, Lahore 1932, A.D., pp. 220-35, 275./ P.K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, Tokyo 1977, pp. 247-49./ Norman Hollister, The Shia of India, London, 1953, pp. 15, 24./ I. Friedlnader, Abdullah Ibn-i-Saba, 1909 The Encyclopaedia of Islam, (New Edition), Vol I, London, 1960, p.51.
 4. Zawwar Husain, op. cit., p. 677.
Muhammad Farman, Hayat-i-Mujaddid, Lahore 1958, pp. 254-59.
Abul Hasan Zaid Faraqi, Hazrat Mujaddid Aur Unke Nagedin, Delhi 1977, pp. 47-49.

Risalah-i-Tahliliya¹, - an Arabic treatise, written in 1010 A.H./ 1601-02 A.D., deals with the importance of "Kalima-i-Taiyyaba", Muslim confession of faith. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is reported to have written this brochure at a time when Akbar and his followers had removed "Muhammad is the Prophet of God" from the 'Kalima' and introduced new confession "There is no God but God and Akbar is God's representative".² The Risalah sheds a flood of light on monotheism (Tawhid) and prophecy (Risalat).

Mabda-wa-Maad³ - a Persian work, written between 1008/1599-1600 and 1019/1610, contains fifty four short chapters dealing with a variety of sufi subjects, such as Bai'at, "Outb-i-Irshad", "Adab-i-Tariqat", "Kamalat-i-Auliya",

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1. Published from Karachi 1384 / 1964.
 2. For detail see, Badayuni, Maktakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1869, 273 The Cambridge History of India, Vol. IV, Delhi 1957, p. 131./ V.A. Smith, Akbar the Great Mughal, Delhi 1966, pp. 154-59. Muhammad Aslam, Din-i-Ilahi aur Uska Pasmanzar, Delhi 1969, pp. 182-84.
 3. Published from Delhi 1307 A.H./ Kanpur 1891 A.D./ Amritsar 1912 A.D./ Karachi, 1388 A.H.

"Haqiqat-i-Kaba", and "Haqiqat-i-Quran", etc.¹ Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi frequently refers to this brochure in the first volume of his Maktubat. Both Hazarat-ul-Quds and Zubdat-ul-Maqamat quote extensively from it.²

Maarif-i-Laduniya³, a mystic work written in Persian, is very similar in structure and content to Mabda-o-Maad. It is not dated and one can only say with certainty that it was written after Shaikh Ahmad had joined the Naqshbandi order.⁴ It defines the secrets of Divine Attributes and sheds interesting light⁵ on the hidden meanings of some Quranic verses.⁵

Makashifat-i-Ainiya,⁶ (also known as Makashifat-i-Ghaibiya), is a collection of different Ijazat namas, written authority or permission, the Mujaddid gave to his Khalifas first time

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1. Friedmann, op.cit., p.5/ Zawwar Hussain, Hazarat Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, pp. 680-1/ Muhammad Farman, Hayat-i-Mujaddid, p. 253.
 2. Friedmann, "Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi", p. 5/Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp. 141-4, 170-4.
 3. Published from Rampur 1898 A.D./ Karachi 1358 A.H./ Lahore 1376 A.H.
 4. Friedmann, op. cit, p. 5.
 5. Zawwar Husain, op. cit, p. 680./ Hayat-i-Mujaddid, p. 253.
 6. Published from Karachi, 1384/1964.

to time.¹ It also contains the Shajras, spiritual as well as genealogical trees, of different silsilahs -Chistiya, Naqshbandiya and Qadiriya. This brochure was compiled by the author of the Zubdat-ul-Maqamat in 1051-53 A.H.²

The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat of Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi is the earliest available authority for the life of the saint. The author, had personal contact with the saint and was spiritually connected with him. Naturally therefore the subjective element is predominant in his narrative. He looks at his spiritual mentor with profound respect and finds some element of spiritual significance in every action of the saint reported to him. As it was completed within three years after the death of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, it occupies a place of precedence in the Naqshbandi literature produced in India. Its accounts contain many valuable details and at several places he refers to the information he directly received from the Shaikh in his life time.³ Next coming Hazarat-ul-Quds of Badruddin Ibrahim Sirhindi. Apart from biographical and other

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1. Zawwar Husain, op. cit., p. 682.
 2. Ibid, p. 792. Also, Abdul Hasan Ali Nadvi, Tarikh-i-Dawat-wa-Azimat, Vol IV, Lucknow, 1980, p. 386.
 3. The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat was first published in 1302 A.H. / 1885 A.D. by Matba-i-Mahmud, Lucknow and later in 1307 A.H. / 1890 A.D. by Nawal Kishore Press, Kanpur, at the initiative of Pandit Ajodhiya Nath, Vakil High Court, Allahabad.

details about the Shaikh, it attempts reputation of the views of his credits.¹ Both Kishmi and Badruddin throw light on Shaikh Ahmad's mystical as well as religious thought and his contact with other sufis, ulama and nobles. These work also contain accounts of Khwaja Baqi Billah and his spiritual successors.

The Maktubat written by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's sons, Khwaja Muhammad Ma'sum² and Khwaja Muhammad Sa'id³ are also of great value. Both these brothers were brought up under direct spiritual training of their illustrious father, and later on came to occupy a pre-eminent place in contemporary mystic life. Their contribution to the development of the Naqshbandi silsilah in India is unquestionable. Aurangzeb is reported to have been greatly inspired by the religious thought of Khwaja Muhammad Ma'sum and Khwaja Muhammad Sa'id. A number of mystical concepts of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind have been either explained or elaborated in these letters. Moreover, the impact of Sirhindi's thought on and his image

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1. The Hazarat-ul-Quds is divided into two parts. The second part, devoted to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, has been published from Lahore in 1971 by the Punjab Waqf Board (Pakistan).
 2. Maktubat-i-Ma'sumiya, publish from Lahore, 1917.
 3. Maktubat-i-Sa'eediya, Lahore, 1385 A.H.

in the eyes of posterity can also be studied in these works. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya¹ of Kamaluddin Muhammad Ehsan has also been an important source of our study of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. It was written during the reign of Muhammad Shah. It no doubt, provides some valuable pieces of information about the life of the Shaikh, which is not available in the Zubdat-ul-Maqamat and Hazarat-ul-Quds, it has confused facts with fiction. It is necessary to separate chaff from grain so far as the historical importance of this work is concerned.

So far as the history of Akbar Jahangir's period is concerned, we have mainly utilized the works of Abul Fazl, (Ain-i-Akbari² and Akbarnama³), Badayuni (Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh),⁴ Jahangir (Tuzuk)⁵ and Shah Nawaz Khan (Maathir-ul-Umara).⁶ The material contained in their historical works has provided the basis for historical assessment of the role of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

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1. An incomplete manuscript copy of this work is owned by the Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh. But it's Urdu translation was published from Lahore in 1335 A.H.
 2. Published from Lucknow, 1892.
 3. Calcutta, 1886.
 4. Calcutta, 1869.
 5. Aligarh, 1864.
 6. Calcutta, 1888.

CHAPTER-1
THE MILIEU

CHAPTER-I

THE MILIEU

Before studying the life, thought and the religious as well as mystic activities of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, it is necessary to make a historical analysis of the period in which he was born, brought up, received education and started his career as alim and sufi. As contemporary thought, trends and movements play an important part in the evolution of human personality and deeply influence the ideas, actions and other aspects - both inward and outward, of the life of every individual, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also must have been either influenced or come into conflict with many social, political and religious trends of the time. He also must have observed and studied the condition and environment of the time from different points of view. His writings reveal that he was very much disgusted with the ideology and functioning of various religious persons and groups, both outside and inside the Muslims society. If properly analysed, we see that the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries of the Christian era in India saw mushroom growth of new sects, new philosophies, and new religious approaches.¹ All these trends and tendencies of the period must have determined the direction of his thought.

1. K.A. Nizami, Akbar and Religion, Delhi 1989, p.28.

The Mahdawi movement was the most important movement of the time. It exercised great influence upon the contemporary Muslim society and attracted large number of staunch supporters to its fold. Its founder Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur left a deep impact upon common people, ulama, sufis and the ruling class. All these groups were attached to his teachings and practices for about two centuries. Though there had been some other persons in India who claimed themselves to be promised Mahdi¹ but Syed Muhammad achieved great success as a claimant to this position. He declared himself a Mahdi at the end of the 15th century.

Born on 14th Jamada I 847/9th September 1443 in Jaunpur, during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi (840/1436-7 - 862/1457-8), Syed Muhammad started his early education under Shaikh Daniyal at the age of four years, four months and four days. Initially by memorizing the entire holy Quran he gained mastery over all traditional sciences and at the age of twelve he received the title of

1. For example a man, whose name was Rukn and who had not received proper education in any educational institution or under any teacher, is reported to have claimed to be 'Mahdi-i-Akhir-uz-Zaman'. For details see, Sultan Feroz Shah, Futihat-i-Firuz Shahi, (ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid), Aligarh 1954, pp.7-8.

'Asad-ul-ulama', (the lion of scholars), from his teacher.¹ It is reported that since his very boyhood Syed Muhammad used to receive Divine calls informing him that he was the promised Mahdi. It is also reported that many Divine secrets were revealed to him in those days.² His piety and learning soon became known everywhere. All the contemporary and later sources praise his spiritual and intellectual greatness. According to Abdul Qadir Badayuni Syed Muhammad's wilayat (sainthood) and eminence were unquestionable.³ Large number of his contemporary ulama and scholars, both in India and abroad, are said to be highly impressed by his scholarship and spiritual attainments.⁴ Even Sultan Husain Sharqi (1458-79) was deeply impressed by him and got himself enrolled as Syed Muhammad's disciple.⁵

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1. Abdur Rahman, Sirat Imam Mahdi Mauud, Hyderabad 1369, pp.5-19.
 2. Sirat Imam Mahdi Mauud, p.20.
 3. Nijat-ur-Rashid, (ed.Saiyid Muinul Haq), Lahore, 1972, p.77
 4. Ibid. Abul Kalam Azad, Tazkira, Lahore, p.32. Also Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, Lucknow 1892, Vol.III, p.174. Also Badayuni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Calcutta, 1869, Vol.III, p.67. Also S.A.A.Rezvi, Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India, Agra 1965, pp.78-79.
 5. It is said that Syed Muhammad provided Sultan Husain Shari with the military help to fight against Raja Dalpat of Gaur and himself joined his army and ultimately gained victory over Dalpat. For details see Miyan Mansur Khan, Jannat-ul-Wilayat, Hyderabad 1376, p.14.

In 887/1482 Syed Muhammad left Jaunpur, under a divine inspiration for Mandu. It was in his way that, near Denapur, his wife, son and a follower declared him as the Mahdi. Though the latter confirmed their inspiration but advised them to make the declaration at the proper time.¹ Afterwards he reached Mandu in 892/1486-7 via Kalpi and Chanderi where he attracted a large number of people and even Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji towards his fold.² Badayuni says that an eminent poet and close companion of the Sultan, having been impressed by Syed Muhammad, renounced the world and joined the latter's discipline.³

Later on, he came to Bidar where he left deep impressions upon some eminent ulama who thought him to be the promised Mahdi. After visiting some other places in the Deccan for some time, Syed Muhammad left for Mecca with his 360 followers in 901/1495-96. There he openly declared, in the premises of Ka'ba, that he was the Mahdi. It was his first open declaration of his claim to this promised dignity. Then Syed Muhammad returned to India and stayed at

1. Sirat Imam Mahdi Mauud, pp.36-37.

2. Sirat Imam Mahdi Mauud, pp.44-47.

3. Bandigi Burhanuddin, Shawahid-ul-Wilayat, Hyderabad 1960, p.65.

Ahmadabad for about eighteen months.¹ He also travelled over Jaisalmer, Nagaur and Nasrpur in Sindh and made a sojourn at Thatta for few months. Then he marched towards Khurasan where he was hailed by large crowd and even by the kings and rulers of various places.² Syed Muhammad died on Monday, the 19th Ziqa'da 910/27th April 1505 at Farah in Iran.³

It is said that Syed Muhammad did not found any new religion or sect. He is reported to have said that his main object was to restore Islam to its pristine purity. That is why, he, instead of following the four famous schools of Islamic jurisprudence, laid stress on directly consulting and following the Quran and the Hadith, (the Prophet's Traditions), as basic sources of Islam. The Mahdawi spiritual discipline was based upon the following principles. 'Turk-i duniya' (renunciation of the world), 'Uzlat az Khalq' (seclusion from mankind), 'Tawakkul' (trust

1. Bandigi Miyan Yusuf, Matla-ul-Wilayat, Hyderabad 1955, pp.36-41, Also, Shawahid-ul-Wilayat, pp.89-94. Also Muslim Revivalist Movements, p.85.

2. Sirat Imam Mahdi Mauud, pp.120-22.

3. Ibid., p.139.

in God), 'Talab-i didar-i-haq' (quest for the vision of God), 'Ushr' (distribution of one tenth of income in charity), Zikr (constant meditation and repetition of the names of Allah, loudly and quietly), and Hijrat (migration for religious purpose).¹

The Mahdawis organised small daeras where people were trained in the Mahdawi doctrine and their community life was organized on proper lines. These daeras became a focal point in the propagation of Syed Muhammad's doctrine. Gujarat, Sind, Biyana and Kalpi were the main centres of the Mahdawis. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad says: "Ninth century Hijri prior to the reign of Akbar was a period of great tumult, confusion, and unrest. The rise and fall of kingdoms was an every day feature. There was no central government strong enough to vouchsafe the promulgation and protection of the ordinances of Shariat. The wordly minded ulama were in greater number than the God-fearing ulama. Materialism, fraud and deceit were rampant. To crown them all, the bid'at (innovations) and the unlawful activities of the ignorant

1. For details see, S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, Tarikh-i-Dawat-o-Azimat, Vol.IV, Lucknow, 1980, P.55.

sufis had added to the confusion and misled the people. Seeing this, Syed Muhammad raised his voice for the revival of Shariat and the establishment of the lawfulness".¹ But Professor K.A.Nizami, on the contrary, is of the opinion that although the movement of Syed Muhammad had come into existence for the revivalism of Sunnah and the eradication of innovations but it could not continue in its original form for a long period. According to him the concept of Mahdawiyat clashed with the concept of Khatm-i Nabuwat, (finality of the Prophet), which is one of the basic principles of Islam. Ultimately, many of the ulama of the time started to oppose and condemn it.² It appears that the Mahdawis were active even during the time of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Like other contemporary ulama, he too thought the Mahdawi movement and doctrines injurious to Islam and the Muslims. He vehemently criticises them in his various letters.³ He says; "Any type of laziness and negligence in

1. Tazkira, P.32

2. K.A. Nizami, Hayat-i-Shaikh Abdul Haq Mahaddith Dehlawi, Delhi, 1964, pp.271-72.

3. Makhtubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.II, Letters No.15, 67, 68.

the task of religious propagation leads to the encouragement of innovators and even creates hindrance in the way of Islam. It is only because of this negligence and laziness that the Mahdawis are openly preaching their faith by inviting true Muslims to their false faith; as soon as they get opportunity they take one or two Muslim to their fold".¹ In another letter Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi writes, "Some foolish people think that the person who emerged from amongst the Indian Muslim and claimed himself to be the promised Mahdi was the real Mahdi. They also think that the Mahdi has expired and say that his (the Mahdi's) grave is in Fara. All the reliable traditions (ahadith) totally deny and reject these persons as whatever features of the Mahdi have been described by the Holy Prophet of Islam, do not at all fit in his case. It is very regrettable that, due to ignorance, people are going astray instead of knowing every thing correct and clear about the concept of promised Mahdi".²

1. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter 15.
2. Maktubat, Vol.II, Letter No.67.

The Raushaniya Movement¹ also assumed great importance in the pre-Sirhindi period in Mughal India. "For about a century", says Dr. Tariq Ahmad, "The Raushaniya activity in

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1. Its founder Bayazid Ansari, born in Jalandhar in 1525, belonged to a Qazi family which claimed descent from Abu Ayyub Ansari, the famous companion of the Prophet of Islam. His father, after his birth, shifted to Kaniguram in South Afghanistan, where Bayazid was brought up. Since his very boyhood Bayazid's mind was more concerned about metaphysical and ontological problems than ordinary problems of religions or mundane affairs of life. Later on he independently started trade and in this connection he had to travel frequently between Samarqand and India. It is said that on one of his business journeys he went to Kalinjer where he came into contract with Mulla Sulaiman, an Ismaili, and was so impressed by him that he joined his discipline. Gradually the Ismaili thoughts and practices fascinated Bayazid and he became deeply introspective and seclusion loving. He soon began to feel that he had some great mission to fulfil and was himself a perfect spiritual mentor. He, therefore, claimed having achieved qurbat (nearness to God) and having heard the Divine voice, but in the early stages he did not reveal his spiritual experiences to anyone. He mostly remained busy in repetition and meditation. One day he left as if he was one with God and thereafter he claimed to have undergone strange spiritual experiences. Later he journeyed through various cities and towns of Afghanistan and Central Asia. According to Tariq Ahmad, "Mystic contemplation made Bayazid ego-centric and he began to consider himself superior to others". Consequently, people started to oppose him and wherever he went congenial place for the propagations of his ideas and the organisation of his movement. Ultimately he settled down in Peshawar which proved receptive to Bayazid's doctrines. He successful in winning over the Afghans who live around Peshawar and belonged to the Khalil tribe. For details see Tariq Ahmad, The Raushaniya Movement, Delhi 1982, pp.31-40.

the frontier region engaged the attention of the Indian Mughals".¹

The teachings of Bayazid Ansari, the founder of the Raushaniya Movement, represent a curious mixture of sufi, Mahdawi and Ismaili traditions. He had clear awareness of his needs and he picked up from the various religious ideologies elements which could be of help to him. He took such elements which could augment his religious prestige and establish his superiority over the people. Ideologically Bayazid drew sustenance for his movement from the concept of 'Wahdat-ul-Wujud'. But the way in which he gave expression to his Wajudi ideas could not but be criticised by the orthodox section. Tariq Ahmad says, "Infact much of the criticism which Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi levelled against the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wujud was due to ideas as expressed by persons with immature spiritual experiences like Bayazid Ansari".²

Bayazid preached that through constant Zikr (recitation of the name of God) and meditation, union could be

1. The Raushaniya Movement, p.4.

2. Ibid, p. 58.

established with the Creator. Contrary to the thought of the Sufis that Union of God and man was possible only in rare movements of ecstasy, Bayazid Ansari preached the permanence of Union. According to him God is omnipresent and every existing object and creation is His form.¹

As for his spiritual discipline, Bayazid refers to six stages which could lead man to salvation. In his Hal Namah he mentions these eight stages of spiritual development as Shariat, Tariqat, Haqiqat, Marifat, Qurbat, Waslat and Sakunat.² Bayazid also laid stress on the necessity of having a pir. He told his followers that nothing could be achieved without a pir. According to him obeying the pir meant obeying the Prophet and the God.³

In 1545 Bayazid started enrolling disciples. He informed his followers that he had been sent by God to educate his people. He claimed that he had acquired spiritual perfections directly. He appointed Khalifas and

1. Ibid, p.59.

2. Tariq Ahmad, op.cit., p.60.

3. Ibid, p.62.

sent da'is (missionaries) to propagate his teachings and to enrol disciples. He wrote and sent various treatises to his contemporary rulers, saints and ulama, and invited them to join his religious discipline.¹ Bayazid had also compiled a book entitled Khair-ul-Bayan, which he used to show and teach to his disciple after fully examining their devotion to himself and completely gripping their attention to his thought and practices. It appears the brochure dealt with Bayazid's secret spiritual and prophetic attainment. Thus, he claimed to have received instructions through Divine inspiration.² It appears that he legalized assassinations and murders of non-Raushaniyas. According to him whosoever does not know himself and God, he is not a man; and being harmful, he is to be reckoned a wolf, a tiger, a serpent or scorpion; and the Prophet has said "kill a harmful creature before it causes harm". He would say that a person, whether of good conduct or a performer of namaz, was to be considered as an ox or sheep and the killing of such a creature is lawful.³

1. The Raushaniya Movement, p.63.

2. Ibid., p.64..

3. Tariq Ahmad, op.cit., pp.65-66.

So far as the Mughal-Raushaniya relations were concerned, the Mughals in the initial stages adopted a policy of wait and watch. As soon as the movement assumed dimensions which directly or indirectly threatened Mughal interests in the region, this policy was abandoned by the Mughals. The area of influence of the Raushanias being between Kabul and the Indus-specially around the Khaibar pass - the Mughals strained every nerve to establish their control over this region. It is to be borne in mind that so long as Bayazid confined himself to purely religious and social activities, Akbar took little notice of him. But as his movement developed political dimensions, he (Akbar) had no option but to act.¹

Though we do not find the Raushaniya Movement to be referred to in Sirhindi's works, he must have come across the basic religious ideology of Bayazid Ansari. He also must have studied his thought in the light of Quran and Sunnah and finally found it contrary to the teaching of Islam.

An other movement which influenced the sixteenth century society of Iran and India, and even the thought of

1. The Raushaniya Movement, pp.41-42.

Emperor Akbar was the 'Nuqtawi movement'.¹ It owed its origin to Mahmud Pasikhani² of Iran (ob. 800/1397). Many Nuqtawis are reported to have migrated to India in fear of persecution in Iran by the Shia rulers.³ Some of them joined Akbar's court as well. Badyuni says that some of the court poets in Akbar's reign were Nuqtawis.⁴ Abul Fazl had correspondence with Nuqtawis of Iran.⁵ The Nuqtawi attitude towards Islam and its Shariat was far from respectful. They ridiculed many practices like Haj and the fast of Ramazan etc. It is said that Ibahati traditions were also prevalent among the Nuqtawis. According to the author of Dibastan-i

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1. For the details of the 'Nuqtawi movement' in Iran see, Sadiq Kaya, Nuqtawiyān ya Pasikhāniyān, Tehran 1320 A.H. Also; Nazir Ahmad, Tarikhī wa Adabī Maqilē, Aligarh 1961, pp.5-8. Also, Ali Raza Zakawati, "Nigha-i-Tazah-i-ba Munabe'Nuqtawīya", in Tahqiqat-i-Islami, Tehran, Vol.II, No.2, (March 1988), pp.31-39. Also, Muhammad Aslam, Din-i-Ilahi aur uska Pasmanzar, Delhi, 1969, pp.163-77.
 2. See, Ibid.
 3. Askander Munshi, Tarikh-i-Aalam Ara-i-Abbasi, Vol.II, Tehran, 1314, A.H. p.325.
 4. Badyuni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.205.
 5. Aslam, op.cit., p.164.

Mazahib, the Nuqtawis recited some prayers with their face towards the sun. They believed in the transmigration of the souls, rejected the idea of Resurrection and questioned the concept of the Day of judgement. Their attitude toward the Quran was also heretical as they believed it to be the word of the Prophet of Islam.¹ The Nuqtawis found a congenial atmosphere in India where Akbar's court had become a place for all free thinkers, Sharif Amuli, who represented the Nuqtawis at Akbar's court, attracted many of the courtiers to religious fold. He also had deep impact upon Faizi and Abul Fazl.² Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi surely might have got information of this movement role in forming his strict ideas about religious innovation which he considered to be severely harmful.

The mystic thought of Shaikh Muhiyuddin Ibn-i Arabi was the pivotal point of Muslim religious thought in medieval India. His works, specially the 'Fusus-ul Hikam' and the 'Futuh-at-i Makkiya' exerted great influence on Muslim mind

1. Dabistan-i-Mazahib, (Muhsin Fani), Lucknow, 1881, pp.300-301. (Tehran edition 1362 A.H., Part I, p.277).

2. Dir-i-Ilahi aur Uska Pasmanzar, p.164.

and were accepted in the mystic circle as the guide books for one who set out on a journey of the uncharted ocean of mystic experience.¹ It is reported that the ideas of the Great Shaikh (Ibn-i Arabi) reached and were introduced in India through Shaikh Fakhruddin Iraqi, a disciple of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan. Iraqi had attended the lectures of Maulana Sadruddin Qunwi, who was a brilliant advocate of Ibn-i Arabi's thought. In the beginning many commentaries were written on Ibn-i Arabi's thought in Arabic² so that the thought did not reach the spiritually immature and create an atmosphere of religious anarchy. In the early centuries the mystic teachers took care not to associate the common people in the abstruse mystic thought

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1. For a detailed study of Ibn-i-Arabi's thought in India see, K.A. Nizami, Tarikh-i-Maqalat, Delhi 1966, pp.24-31. Also, Salatin-i-Delhi ke Mazhabi Rujhanat, Delhi 1981, pp.412-14.
 2. For instance Syed Ali Hamadani wrote a commentary on Fusus-ul-Hukam in Arabic. Abul Muhasin Sharafuddin of Delhi's (d. 1392/798). 'Ain-ul-Fusus Sharh-ul-Fusus', Shaikh Pir Ali Muhaimis (d.835/1431) Sharh-ul-Khusus fi Shar-ul-Fusus li Ibn-ul-Arabi' Sheikh Imamuddin Arifis 'Sharh-ul-Fusus' Shaikh Ali Saghar Qannaujis (d.1140/) 'Jawame-ul-Kalam fi Sharh Fusus-ul-Hikam', Shaikh Nuruddin Ahmadabadi's 'Tariqat-ut-umam fi Sharh Fusus-ul-Hikam', and Mulla Abdul Ali Firangi Mahalis, 'Sharh-ul-Fusus-un-Nahi min Fusus ul-Hikam', etc. For details see, Tarikh-i Maqalat'. pp.24-31.

of Ibn-i Arabi as it was generally believed that Wujudi ideas, if not properly understood and assimilated, could give birth to heretical movements. But in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries this cautious attitude was abandoned and pantheistic ideas of Ibn-i Arabi became a current coin. Masud Bakk, who was executed at the orders of Firuz Shah Tughluq, gave expression to pantheistic ideas in his diwan 'Nur-ul-Ain' and a mystic treatise known as Mirat-ul Arifin. According to Shaikh Abdul Haq Mahaddith of Delhi no one before Masud Bakk discussed mystic secrets as openly as he did.¹ It appears that during the time of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi the diwan of Masud Bakk was widely read.²

The impact of Ibn-i Arabi's thought is clearly discernible in Indo-Muslim religious thought during the sixteenth century. Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi started open discussions about pantheistic philosophy. Commentaries on Ibn-i Arabi's works came to be written in Persian. Shaikh Amanullah Panipati started giving instructions to people in

1. Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith, Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, p.169.

2. Tarikhi Maqalat, PP. 24-31.

the Fusus-ul-Hikam and Futuhāt-i-Makkiya.¹ The impact of his teachings and sermons was so deep and effective that when Shaikh Abdul Haq's father Shaikh Saifuddin reached his Khangah, he started crying, "Every thing is God."² According to Gulzar-i-Abrar the Afghans were also very interested in the ideas of Shaikh-i-Akbar, Ibn-i Arabi. Daulat Khan Lodi's son went to Syed Ahmad Afghan in order to seek elucidation of some ideas of Ibn-i-Arabi.³

The impact of Pantheistic ideas on Muslim religious thought had some delicate implications. If not properly controlled, it encouraged the development of unconventional religious idea, weakened the sentiments of adherences to Sariat and also encouraged fissiparous tendencies. It is significant that many of the movements of the period, which is one way or the other deviated from the orthodox path, drew inspiration from Ibn-i-Arabi's works and his pantheistic ideas. It appears that some writing of Ibn-i-

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1. Gulzar-i-Abrar, (Urdu translation), Agra, 132 A.H., p.266.
 2. Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, pp.293-95.
 3. Gulzar-i-Abrar, (Urdu) pp.551-552.

Arabi were brought to the notice of Akbar also and he was also inspired by them.

When Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi organized his revivalist movement, he trenchantly criticised the ideas of Ibn-i-Arabi. If his thought as expressed in the three volumes of his letters, is analysed, it would appear that he considered the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wujud as the source of all waywardness in religious life. He believed that the currency of pantheistic ideas among the Muslims was bound to shaken their faith in Shariat law. His criticism of Wahdat-ul-Wujud had a tremendous impact on the contemporary Muslim mind.

The second half of the sixteenth century also saw the emergence of the Christians and the Christianity in the Indian sub-continent. Apart from the conversion of thousands the people, both Hindus and Muslims, to this new religion, the ruling class of the period was also inclined towards its preachers. Emperor Akbar was convinced that Christian principles must possess exceptional value and influence over the hearts of men.¹ In 1577, he first came into contact

1. V.A. Smith, Akbar, The Great Mogul, (third edition reprint), Delhi, 1966, p.97.

with 'Pietro Taveres', a Portuguese officer, who visited Akbar's Court with his wife. It is said that his sound sense and upright conduct won him the favour and esteem of the Emperor.¹ The latter sent for Father Julian Pereiria, the Vicar-general of Bengal, to Fatehpur Sikri in 1578. This man, Pereiria, openly exposed 'the errors of Islam'. Akbar was so much impressed by the Christian teachings that he requested the priest (Pereiria) to teach him Portuguese and the Christian doctrine.² But it seems that both these Christian priests could not satisfy the Emperor. In 1578, Akbar also maintained relations with the Portuguese of Daman and received Antonio Cabral as their ambassador. The latter spent sometime at the Mughal court. He gave the Emperor a considerable amount of information concerning Christian manner and customs. But still Akbar seems to be unsatisfied as Cabral was not in position to expound with authority the deeper matters of his faith'. Accordingly, he decided to make arrangements for obtaining instructions from fully qualified experts. In December 1578, Akbar sent Abdullah Khan, as his envoy, to the Portuguese authorities

1. Nowroze Cooverji Mehta, The Religious Policy of Akbar, Bombay, 1946, p.74.

2. Ibid.

at Goa and despatched to them a letter requesting him to send to him two learned men alongwith books of law, and above all the Gospel.¹ He earnestly desired to understand their perfection. The Emperor, in his letter, assured them of full honour and protection. The Portuguese too, without any action of their own part, found the door suddenly thrown open to them by the king himself. Hearing his keen interest in Christianity, the Jesuits thought it better and good fortune to send their representatives.² V.A. Smith says, "A king so great and a kingdom so extensive to the glory of the Church and the benefit of Portugal was not to be neglected".³ Hence, their first mission consisting of Father Rudolph Aquamiva⁴, as

1. Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, Vol.I, Lucknow, 1892, p.423.
2. Mehta, op.cit., p.74.
3. Smith, op.cit., p.121.
4. An Italian by birth, he was the bader of the first Christian mission to Akbar's court. He arrived at Goa from Europe at the time when Akbar's ambassador reached there from Fatehpur Sikri. Though he was barely 30 at that time, showing his willingness to visit the Mughal Court he was sent there. He returned to Goa in 1583 and thence went to the adjoining territory of Salsette where he was beset by a Hindu mole and murdered. Monserrate praises his peity and secluded habits. His thoughts were always assiduously fixed on God. He was so engrossed in

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head of the mission, Antony Monserate¹, as second in command, and Francis Henriquez, who was a Persian convert from Islam and a native of Ormuz, as interpreter and assistant, was despatched by the Portuguese viceroy to the Mughal Court. They reached Fatehpur Sikri on 18/28th February 1580 after a journey of over three months. Akbar received them with marks of friendship and accorded a warm welcome to this first Christian mission by entertaining in various ways.² They received right royal treatment at the hands of the Emperor and his officers. The fathers were given the fullest

f.n. no.1 contd. from prev.

prayer that very often he slept in his attire that he put on during working hours. He delighted in putting on old worn-out clothes and shoes. His whole-hearted devotion to prayer made him absent minded about his own belongings and would often grope for his hat, spectacles, books etc. His sincere love for virgin marry bust out in extempore little songs of his own invention. The Religious Policy of Akbar, p.74.

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1. Born in 1536 in Catalonia, he has been described by one of his biographers as a man extreme humility and in close touch with God. He was appointed tutor to Prince Murad and accompanied Akbar on his expedition against his brother Mirza Hakeem, but he died in the way at Jalalabad.
 2. Denison Ross and Eileen Power, Akbar and the Jesuits, (Translated with introduction and notes by C.H. Payne), Delhi, 1979, p.18.

facilities and in cases of difficulties they could consult Abul Fazl who was appointed to look after their comforts. They were offered large sums of money which they decline to accept and thus made an impression on Akbar. They were put up in the palace and shared food on the royal table. The Emperor himself personally looked after them.¹ Father Monserrate gives us a detailed account of how Akbar behaved with them. According to him, the Emperor never allowed them to remain uncovered in his presence, both at the solemn meetings of the grandees and in private interviews. When he would take them inside for closer conversation, he would tell them to sit near him. He would shake hands with them most familiarly and would call them apart from the ordinary retainers and indulge with them in private talks.²

Akbar received from these fathers the gift of a magnificently bound copy of the Royal Polyglot Bible of Plantyn, in several volumes and in four languages, printed in 1569-72 for Philip II of Spain. He is said to have treated these scriptures with great reverence, taking each

1. Mehta, op.cit., pp.74-75.

2. The Religious Policy of Akbar, p.75.

into his hand one after another, removing his turban to place each volume on his head, and kissing them devoutly.¹ Thereafter Akbar asked him to meet the discussions in the 'Ibadat Khana', where they entered many disputes with ulama and mashaikh.² These Christian priests, particularly Father Monserrate, gave an ugly exhibition of bad taste. The questions like the 'finality of the Quranic Revelation', 'the Prophecy of the Prophet of Islam', 'the Resurrection', 'the Nature of Divinity', and the conception of the 'Unity of God', were subjected to their severe criticism. They openly attacked Islam in rude and offensive language and even used foul words against its Prophet.³ They are also reported to have advised Akbar to ban the Quran and its study in his dominion.⁴ Although they could not utter everything that was in their minds, yet they said and did very much. Badayuni says, "Ringing of the conch (Nagqoos) of the Christians, and showing of the figure of the Trinity and

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1. Akbar and the Jesuits, pp.19-20.
 2. Akbar and the Jesuits, p.21.
 3. Ibid, p.16. Also Badayuni, Vol.II, p.260.
 4. Shah Nawaz Khan, Muathir-ul-Ulama, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1888 p.217.

Cribs which is their sign of mirth, and other childish play things (lahw-o-la'b) were in daily practice. And the Infidelity (Kufr) became common and historic".¹ Akbar also commanded his artists to copy the pictures of Christ and the Virgin Mary which the Fathers had with them, and directed to make a box of gold to keep them.²

These Christian priests were allowed to build Chapel near the Royal palace. He himself visited them privately with every mark of respect. They taught him that he should set apart a time for hearing the interpretations of the Divine Laws, and that he should adopt it as his own, and that he should renounce that which was preached in all his kingdom.³ He also gave his second son Murad, then only ten years old, to Father Monserrate, to be taught the Portuguese language and the Christian morals.⁴ The missionaries were given full liberty to preach their religion publicly at Agra

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.304.

2. Akbar and the Jesuits, p.22.

3. Akbar and the Jesuits, pp.22-23.

4. Ibid, p.24.
Badauni, Vol.II, p.260.

and Fatehpur Sikri. According to Sir Edward Maelagan, the fullest liberty of making conversions to Christianity was also given to them.¹ They did all in their power to persuade Emperor Akbar to declare himself a Christian.²

Their attitude was so uncompromising and fanatical that in the words of Vincent Smith, "Nothing but the strong protection of the Emperor could have preserved their lives".³ Dr. R.P. Tripathi is of the opinion that these missionaries did not produce a good impression on and their freedom gave offence to Akbar also.⁴ During their stay at the Mughal court the Portuguese missionaries had to face tough trials, for, we are informed that they were often petted with filth and abused as kafirs.⁵ Still they did not back out in their efforts for the final goal. Smith rightly indicates tht the Emperor's great favours and undue regards

1. Sir Edward Mclagan, The Jesuits and the Great Mogul, London, 1932, p.32.

2. Akbar and the Jesuits, p.40.

3. Akbar, the Great Mugul, p.125.

4. R.P. Tripathi, The Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, Allahabad (Reprint), 1985, p.250.

5. The Religious Policy of Akbar,p.75.

to these Christians as well as their rude behaviour, insulting and hostile attitude to Islam and Muslims, and offensive remarks for the Holy Prophet of Islam greatly antagonised Akbar's rivals and opponents, and even preluded the rebellions in Bengal, Bihar and Kabul. To quote Smith, "As a matter of fact, their presence at Court, the marked favour shown to them by the sovereign, and the licence of their language, helped to influence the discontent which found expression in two formidable rebellions, undoubtedly dangerous to both the throne and life of Akbar".¹ Though these rebellions had pulled down the Ibadat Khan, yet Akbar, after their suppression, resumed its proceedings for a short time and renewed the discussions about the relative values of the Quran and the Bible. He wished the controversy to be continued to discover as to which religion, either Islam or Christianity, was the truer and sounder. These discussion as observes R.P. Tripathi, "Led to all kinds of rumours and misapprehensions not among the outsiders, but also among those who participated in them".² Gradually the attendance -----

1. Akbar, the Great Mogul, p.126.

2. The Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, p.250.

dwindled in the House of worship until the Fathers alone came. Ultimately they also found that it was not worth their while to attend. The debates came to an end in 1582.

In 1585, Akbar came into contact with some English travellers, viz. John Newbery, Rolph Fitch, the London based merchants, James Story, a painter, and William Leeds, a jeweller. The latter is said to have been taken into Akbar's royal service. These English travellers, who stayed at Fatehpur Sikri for about two months, brought with them a letter of recommendation from Queen Elizabeth I, addressed to Emperor Akbar. No account of whatever of the reception of the party by the Mughal ruler has been recorded. It appears that they did not enter any religious controversy and disputes with ulama and scholars.¹

In 1590 a second Portuguese mission arrived at the royal court. It was received with utmost respect and paid much attention. Its members were Edward Leiton and Christophe Vega. Nothing much is known of the activities of this mission. Five years later, in 1595, a third Portuguese mission came to Akbar's court at Lahore. He paid them extra-

1. V.A. Smith, op.cit., pp.164-65.

ordinary personal honour permitting the Jesuits not only to be seated in his presence, but to occupy part of the cushion on which he himself and heir to the throne would sit. They were also exempted from performing the ceremony of the prostration before the Emperor.¹ The members of the mission, viz. Father Jerome Xavier, who was the grand-nephew of Saint Francis, Father Emmanuel Pinheiro and Brother Benedict de Góes, frequently visited and presented gifts to Akbar. He willingly accepted a book written by Father Xavier on the life and doctrines of Christ, gave perfect freedom of worship to the Jesuits.² Akbar embraced images of their Lord and the Blessed Virgin, and kept them for a long time in his arms. He also attended litany service in the Chapel and exhibited special devotion to them.³ The Fathers tried to lead the Emperor to many sinful acts, which Islam forbade to be committed, and suggested him for declaring the Quran false and untrustworthy.⁴ Nevertheless, they were allowed

1. Akbar and the Jesuits, pp.49-51.

2. The Religious Policy of Akbar, p.75.

3. Akbar and the Jesuits, pp.62-71.

4. Ibid., p.27.

to build Churches at Agra, Lahore and other distant places of the Mughal Empire.¹ Akbar is reported to have bore all expenses of the constructions of these Churches and even visited the Church at Agra.² In 1603 Akbar allowed these Portuguese Christian missionaries to make willing conversions.³ Father Pinheiro is stated to have succeeded in converting a Syed, a Shaikh who had been to Mecca and after his conversion went from Lahore to Agra to assist the Fathers in other conversions, a mother and a daughter of the

1. R.S. Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Rulers, Bombay (Reprint), 1962, p.37.

Mehta, op.cit., pp.80-81.

Akbar allowed the Father in 1599 to build a Church at Agra adjacent to the building where they lived in the city. Another Church was allowed to be built in 1604, which is still known as Akbar Badshah ka Girja.

A little after the second Portuguese mission arrived in Lahore, Akbar, on 5th August 1595, gave his assent for the construction of a Church near the place which was completed on September 7, 1597 and opened in the presence of a grand gathering including the Governor of Lahore himself.

Moreover, we also find references of the construction of Christian Churches and Chapels in Bengal, Gujrat and Sindh. We are told of a grand Church to which was built in Thatta in Sindh.

2. Akbar and the Jesuits, p.25.
3. It is to be mentioned here that the oral permission had been given by Akbar to Christian missionaries much earlier, during the stay of the first Portuguese mission at royal court. See Supra p.55.

tribe of the Chaghatai. Several conversions were made from persons of lower classes.¹

Thus we see that Emperor Akbar was so much attracted towards Christianity and the Christian missionaries that he devoted from the teachings Islam itself.

So far as any clash or conflict between Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and the Christian missionaries is concerned, we don't find any reference in this direction. But it is presumed that the Shaikh, who had been for several years to the Mughal capital and associated with many important nobles and officials, surely might have got the complete information of the activities of the Christian priests at Agra and other places. It can easily be supposed that the close contacts of the Christian missionaries with Akbar and other dignitaries of the Mughal empires, and the spread of christianity missionaries especially the conversion of innocent Muslims must have been a very anxious business for him. Nevertheless, he might not have taken the issue as dangerous or threatening to Islam and Muslims in India as Hinduism, its mystic ideology and political dominance.

1. Mehta, op.cit., p.79.

Among the most wicked and astray groups in the Muslim society in those days were the worldly minded ulama. In the words of Professor Nizami, "They had opened the door of darkness through the charm of ijtihad, the interpretation of the Divine laws, and Bidat-i Hasana, the pious innovations."¹ In one of his letters Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind says that most of the ulama of that time had given rise to bidat innovations, and forgotten the way of sunnah.²

The love of worldly things and desire of wealth and dignities had so badly demoralised and despirited these ulama that they could easily be agreed to issue any type of verdict, fatwa, to please Emperor Akbar whose court was the main centre of their substantial activities. When Qazi Khan Badakhshani sought and proved the validity of the prostration before Emperor Akbar, Mulla Alam Kabuli regretted that he had missed the chance, the same verdict should have been issued by him.³ Really the activities and wrong interpretation of these worldly minded ulama had

1. Hayat-i-Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi, Delhi, 1964, p.272.

2. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani (Turkish edition), Istanbul 1977, Vol.II, Letter No.54.

3. Nizami, op.cit., p.273.

killed the true spirit of Islam. It had become a general tendency of carelessness from the Shariat and the Sunnah. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi writes "As you know better that in previous regime all types of darkness and disturbances were only because of the avarice of the ulama-i Su".¹

Mainly two sections of Ulama existed at Akbar's court in the beginning. One was led by Makhdum-ul Mulk (Abdullah Sultanpuri) and the other was headed by Sadr-us Sudur Shaikh Abdur Nabi. Though they exerted great influence upon and highly regarded and trusted by Akbar, but in the later years they put behind all Islamic norms only for their worldly gains. Badayuni continues to say, "One night the ulama got excited and a great commotion took place. His Majesty did not like this and he told me to bring to his notice hereafter any of this group who uttered unreasonable words, so that he might remove him from the meeting. I said slowly to Asaf Khan that on that account most of them might be turned out. His Majesty asked me what I said and he (Asaf Khan) reported what I told him. His Majesty was so much pleased that he passed on these words to his favourites.

1. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.194.

Makhdum-ul Mulk Maulana Abdullah Sultanpuri was called into the assembly for being ridiculed. His Majesty put against him in discussion Haji Ibrahim and Shaikh Abul Fazl, who had recently come and was now the upholder of the new faith but was rather a just pupil and the only follower, and other new comers. They interrupted him (Makhdum-ul Mulk) in every word. In the midst of all this, some of the favourites also, according to instruction, began to enter into pros and cons and related strange stories about Makhdum. Of these, one night, Kham-i-Jahan said that Makhdum-ul Mulk had given a Fatwa, religious injunction, that Haji pilgrimage in these times is not compulsory, but is hurtful. When he was asked the reason he argued that the road to Mecca is through Iraq and Gujarat. On the land route there is trouble by the Qizil Bash tribe and on the sea route a passport from the Portuguese is to be obtained and in that passport pictures of Mary and Jesus are imprinted and this looks like idol worship. Thus it is prohibited both ways. The other tale (of Makhdum-ul-Mulk) was about the pretext of avoiding the zakat of his property which, at the end of each year, he gave away his treasure to his wife. Similarly his manners and wickedness and deceit and worldliness and oppression which he displayed towards the mashaikh and saints of the

country, particularly to the leaders and deserving people of Punjab, were all related one by one. The related stories which cast all varieties of shame and rebuke on him, and ultimately it was decided that he should be sent knowingly and compulsory to Mecca. When they asked him whether pilgrimage was compulsory on him, he replied 'No'.¹ Likewise, Shaikh Abdun Nabi, another important divine of Akbar's court and Sadr-us-Sudur of the empire, also was known for his misbehaviour, bad manners and short temper. He too is reported to have discovered pretence for avoiding the payment of zakat. According to Badayuni both Makhdum-ul-Mulk and Sadr-us Sudur, participating in the religious discussions in the Ibadat Khana, behaved shamefully towards each other.² Instead of developing better understanding and appreciation they led to bickerings and personal recriminations. They quarrelled among themselves on fundamental questions of Islamic theology and openly exhibited unworthy intolerance to each other's views. They did not confine themselves to oral differences, but also used their pens against each of them. Abdullah Sultanpuri wrote a treatise³ against Abdun Nabi by arguing that no

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, pp.201-4.

2. Ibid., p.255.

congragational nāḥaz could be led by or offered behind him as he (Abdun Nabi) was a patient of bloody piles and his father had disinherited him.¹ Sadr-us-Sudur also is said to have compiled a brochure by refuting Makhdum-ul-Mulk and declaring him to be totally illiterate.² In nutshell, their uncompromising attitude on any controversial point of the Shariat, their quarrel in the Ibadat Khana, which passed from the tongues to blows and abuses, made Emperor Akbar disgusted with Islam itself.³

Besides, there had been many other ulama also in Akbar's Court who actively participated in the proceedings of the House of worship. They too cursed their opponents and imputed allegations to one another. Haji Ibrahim Sirhindi issued a fatwa by legalising the use of the yellow and the red dresses for men. He is also said to have discovered a fabricated hadith which permitted to shave beard. According to that hadith, "Once the Holy Prophet of Islam received one of his 'companions' son who had shaved his beard. The

1. Badayuni, op.cit., p.255.

2. Ibid.

3. Muhammad Yasin, A Social History of Islamic India, 1605-1748, Lucknow, 1958, p.141.

'Messenger of God', looking at the young man, told that the inhabitants of the Paradise would also be clean shaved like him, the son of his companion".¹ Another Muslim divine found out another anecdote that one should not have beard like that of the Qazis of Iraq.² Similarly a third alim came forward denouncing the legality of beard.³ Likewise, various other topics of Islamic theology and jurisprudence were wrongly explained to Emperor Akbar by these scholars.⁴ One pronounced a thing lawful, another would pronounce the very same thing unlawful.⁵ Syed Muhammad Mir Adl, also a divine of Akbar's court, called his apponent, even in the Imperial presence, an accussed wrethc, abused him and lifted his stick to strike him.⁶ Thus the behaviour of these worldly minded ulama shocked Emperor Akbar's by weakening his faith in Islam.

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, vol.II,p.278.

2. Ibid., Vol.II, p.304.

3. Ibid., p.303.

4. Ibid., pp.209, 259.

5. Ibid., p.211.

We can not see a complete picture of the religious condition at Akbar's reign especially at his court, without studying the role of shaikh Mubarak and his sons Faizi and Abul Fazl. Of all the important groups, active in the Ibadat Khana, potentially the most dangerous was that of Shaikh Mubarak of Nagaur and both of his clever sons. They were cast in the same mould. They joined hands in humiliating the orthodox ulama and other religious minded Muslims in the Mughal Court and played an important role in the tremendous change in Akbar's beliefs. Shaikh Mubarak was learned man, and his learning was matched only his antagonism to the orthodox ulam in power, especially Abdullah Sultanpuri the Makhdum-ul- Mulk, and Shaikh Abdun Nabi, the Sadr-us-Sudur. He had been a Mahdawi in the previous years but, after their suppression, gave up all pretensions of sympathy with them and called himself a Naqshbandi to please some powerful Central Asian nobles. When Shia nobles seemed to be gaining ground, he advocated the Shia point of view.¹ On his appearance at the Mughal Court and especially at the Ibadat Khana, he suggested a thesis that seemed to fit Akbar's

 1. For details see Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.III, pp.73-74.

purpose admirably. He tried to twist well known principles of Islamic jurisprudence and constitutional practice to serve Akbar's design. In 1573, when Akbar returned to Sikri from his gujrat campaign, Shaikh Mubarak advised him to give a lead to his people in matters religious.¹ Quraishi rightly says that Shaikh Mubarak activities, which were hostile to Islam and Muslims, were based on personal vendetta. He prostituted his learning for damaging the cause of Islam.² It appears he did every thing in this connection willfully and purposely. Quraishi says, "It would be an insult to his intelligence to think even for a moment that he would not know what he was doing".³ Shaikh Mubarak's elder son Abul Faiz Faizi, also learned scholar (but not so profound as his younger brother Abul Fazl) good poet and capable of writing an exegesis of the Quran without using a single letter with dot or dots, would praise Emperor Akbar for venerating the sun.⁴

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1. Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, p.248.
 2. I.H. Quraishi, Akbar, Delhi (Reprint), 1985, p.138.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Maathir-ul-Umara, Vol.II, pp.588, 589.

His younger son, Abdul Fazl, was also very learned scholar. According to Shah Nawaz Khan, he was equally capable of presenting an exegesis of the verses of the Quran to Akbar when he thought that such a gift would gratify the monarch,¹ and impressing upon his mind that Quran had been written by the Prophet himself and was not inspired.² Having been introduced to Mughal Court in 1574, Abul Fazl exerted so great influence upon Akbar that he considered him the ablest and the most confident among all his nobles and courtiers. Even in his life time some called him an infidel, others said that he was an arch heretic. Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi is rightly of the opinion that, 'A man so learned and so unscrupulous, was extremely dangerous when he had an untutored mind like Akbar's to work upon.'³ Abul Fazl criticised Islam and refuted the ulama's argumentations during the debates in the house of worship. He was not satisfied with merely condemning the ulama in the court but even went to the extent of using bad language against eminent Muslim divines of the past centuries. He attacked Imam Ghazali by declaring his works and saying him as non-

1. Ibid., p.609.

2. Ibid., p.617.

3. Akbar, p.139.

sense.¹ He also refuted the principles of four Muslim schools of jurisprudence, i.e. the Hanafite, the Shafite, the Malikite and the Hanbalite, and unhesitatingly denounced the founders of these school respectively.² It was Abul Fazl who made an impression upon Akbar that Islam was nothing but imitation (tagleed),³ and that it had completed its whole age, one thousand years after the Holy Prophet.⁴ He also brought home the idea of a new faith to the Emperor and excited him to be an incarnation of God. Abdul Fazl taught Akbar that he was the supreme spiritual power and all Divine characteristics are reflected in him.⁵ Accordingly by propounding the concept of millennium⁶, the favourable circumstances were created to declare Akbar a God's prophet.⁷

1. Zubdat-ut-Muqamat, p.131
2. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.200.
3. See the Persian translation of Mahabharata, p.35.
4. Badayuni, op.cit., p.301.
5. Ibid., p.279.
6. Ibid., p.301.
7. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat, Hyderabad (Pakistan), 1383, p.6.

Besides, Babur and Humayun's close contacts with the Iranese and their family association with the Shias had unconsciously moulded the thought process of Akbar. His childhood had passed in the midst of the folklore and traditions of Persia. Moreover, on his arrival in India alongwith Humayun and Bairam Khan, Akbar continued to be under the Shia suzerainty of the Persian monarch.¹ After becoming Emperor in 1556, he remained for some years under the virtual tutelage of Bairam Khan whose attachment to the Shis Sultan of Persia was very pronounced. During his (Bairam's) regency, the whole religious administration of the Mughal Empire ran on Shia lines and even the Sadr-us-Sudur was a Shia alim, Shaikh Gadai.²

During the process of discussion in the Ibadat Khana, when Akbar could not be satisfied on the different problems of Islamic theology and jurisprudence, he invited Shia ulama and scholars to participate in the religious discussions and to know what they (Shias) had to say in different matters. Initially three Shia scholars namely Hakeem Abul Fath,

1. M.L. Roychoudhary, The Din-i-Ilahi (The Religion of Akbar), third edition, Delhi 1985, p.79.
2. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.337.

Hakeem Humayun and Hakeem Nuruddin were warmly received. These ulama not only attracted the attention of Akbar by their theological learning but Akbar developed high admirations for them as men of culture. According to Badayuni, Abul Fath soon obtained so great influence upon the Emperor that he was admitted as his intimate companion. Ultimately he got the dignity of a commander of a thousand and had power of a wakil. Badayuni says that Abul Fath was one of those principal influences that led Akbar away from Islam the path of the Sunnah. Hakeem Humayun was so great a friend of the Emperor that he often said that he did relish his meals if Hakeem Humayun was absent.¹

Mullah Muhammad Yezdi, another great Shia alim of Iran, also deserved to be mentioned among the Shia ulama of Akbar's court. He frequently visited the Emperor and poisoned his ears against the Sunni Muslims. He is also reported to have openly criticised Sunni jurists and even accursed the companions of the Holy Prophet of Islam, especially the first three pious Caliphs and the Prophet's wife Aisha.² Listening to his speeches and private talks,

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.214.

2. Ibid., p.259.

Akbar started to deny the Revelation (Wahi) Prophethood (Nabuwwat), and the Prophetic miracles (Mojezat) etc. Impressed by Mulla Yezdi's feelings Akbar used to say that the Shariat was just an imitation (tagleed). He would consider the reasoning (aqliat) as the basis of the Religion.¹

Besides, there was another Shia alima, Qazi Nurullah Shustari, in those days, who also played an important part in strengthening the Shia community in India by writing a very famous book, Majalis-ul-Muminin², in defence of Shia doctrines. He was appointed as Qazi-ul-Quzat of Lahore on the recommendation of Hakeem Abul Fath. It is remarkable that Qazi Nurullah, who was a staunch Shia, on his appointment was allowed to decide the cases according all four schools of the Sunni jurisprudence.³ Thus we are informed of many Shia ulama in Akbar's court. They advocated and supported Shia customs and practices, e.g., muta (the

1. Ibid., p.211.

2. Published from Tehran in 1299 A.H.

3. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.III, pp.

custom of the temporary marriage) and tagaiyya (the pious fraud) etc., in the Ibadat Khana.¹ These ulama did not stop here but even obtained royal permission to make conversions to their sect.² They must have tried to their best to turn away Emperor Akbar from the Sunni path.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was very much critical of the Shia influences on the Mughal ruler and politics. He considered Shia ideology to be extremely injurious to the path of Kitab-wa-Sunnah. The Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani severely attack Shia faith and its followers. He says, "The waywardness of the company of a heretic (bid'ati) is more strong than that of the company of an infidel (Kafir). Among all the heretical sects the most worst are those who have emunity with Companions of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Almighty Allah calls them as kuffar in His Book, the Quran".² As will be discussed later, he also compiled a complete brochure in the refutation of the Shia sect and beliefs.

1. Ibid., Vol.II, p.209.

2. Ibid., Vol.II, p.317.

The forces of Hindus and Hinduism were also trying to gain social, political, cultural and religious supremacy over all other communities of the Mughal empire during the sixteenth and the (early) seventeenth centuries. If, on one hand, Hindu rulers raised their heads to strengthen their dominions, on the other, many Hindu revivalist movements and religious personalities are reported to have been launched and openly preached their religious ideology. Let us briefly analyse the whole situation.

Despite his religious devotion, orthodoxy and even sympathetic attitude towards Islam and the Muslims, under the influence of his mother, in the early years of his reign, Akbar had also been, at the same time, in touch and acquainted with Hindus and their beliefs, and practices. Certain measures in this regard were adopted by him when he was still under the influence of orthodoxy. In 1562, on his way to Ajmer, in order to visit the Dargah of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, when he came into contact with Raja Bihari Mall, the Chief of Ambar/Jaipur in Rajputana, he married the latter's daughter at Sambhar.¹ The bride

1. Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, pp.243-44.

subsequently became the mother of Saleem (Jahangir). Moreover, Akbar introduced Raja Man Singh, a nephew and the adopted son of Raja Bhagwan Das who was the heir of Raja Bihari Mall, into the imperial service and rose him ultimately to the high office. Furthermore, in 1563, while engaged in tiger hunting and encamped at Mathura, it was brought to his notice that his government had been levied taxes from Hindu pilgrims visiting their sacred places. "He felt", in the words of Abul Fazl, "That it was contrary to the will of God to tax the people assembled to worship Him, even though their form of worship might be arroneous". He, therefore, remitted Hindus from these taxes, throughout his empire, which amounted to millions of rupees.¹ The other important step of Akbar in pursuance of his policy of sympathy and kindness for Hindus, which had already resulted in his marriage with the princess of Ambar, the conferment of the office on Raja Man Singh, and the remission of the pilgrim taxes on Hindus, was the abolition of the Jizya, the poll tax required to be paid by the non-Muslims in an Islamic state, early in 1564.²

1. Akbar Nama, Vol.II, p.190.

2. Ibid., II, p.190.

In 1570 Akbar again married Hindu princesses of Bikaner and Jaisalmer¹. Though these Rajput girls were formally converted to Islam, yet their influence in the affairs of the Empire was remarkable and gradually they did not hesitate in siding openly with the forces arranged against Islam or at least orthodoxy. As their conversion was not the result of any change in their conditions but a political and social necessity, their loyalties to their community remained unchanged. According to Badayuni, they worshiped pigs which were kept in the palace and in its vicinity as they believed that God had incarnated Himself in them.² (we seek refuge of God). Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi is rightly of the view that "Akbar's Hindu consorts must have persuaded their husband to keep pigs to enable them to pay their respect to these creatures, because they are believed to be an incarnation of Shiva".³ Besides, Bir Bal and Raja Todar Mal also achieved great eminence, the former as a pleasant companion of the Emperor and the latter as an able administrator and general.⁴

1. Ibid., pp.518-19.

2. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.305.

3. Akbar, p.141.

4. Maathir-ul-Umara, Vol.II, pp.118-129.

Akbar's sympathy for Hindus and their religious outlook had been growing steadily. His social relations with the Hindu nobles notwithstanding, "His Hindu wives", says Dr. R.P. Tripathi, "By their religious favour, personal devotion and sweet simplicity, must have exercised unconcious influence on the mind of Akbar".¹ All such influences prompted him to come near to Hinduism. Like his curiosity to know the doctrines of Christian religion, Akbar also showed interest in the acquisition of the first-hand knowledge of the Hindu thought and principles. He now invited pandits and jogis to expound the doctrine of Hindu religion. Bir Bal and Man Singh discussed their religious ideas with and tried to mould him to their own faith.²

Impressed by these people, Akbar removed all restrictions upon the public religious worship by non-Muslims. He also removed restriction on the construction of building of public worship. Accordingly, many Hindu temples were erected at different places of Hindu pilgrimage. Hindu officers and nobles availed the opportunity and built

1. Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, p.253.

2. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.257.

temples dedicated their to gods and goddesses. Man Singh built temples at Banaras and Bindraban, and spent several lakhs of rupees on their decorations. Another temple was allowed to be repaired and its main idole, destroyed by the imperial army during the Kangra expedition in 1572-73, was restored to its place of honour.¹ He is also reported to have sanctioned heavy amounts for the establishment of a dharmshala at Churin in Kangra. Its founder, a recluse, was allowed to claim as much land as his cow could cover in a day.² Similarly, the Hindus of Thanaser in Punjab were permitted to rebuild the temple in the tank of Kurukshetra by demolishing a mosque at the site.³ Another temple at Achal Makani near Batala was also rebuilt.⁴

Akbar also paid extra-ordinary attention to the development of Hindu culture and civilisation. He organised a translation department and many religious books of Hindus were ordered to be translated into Persian.⁵ Moreover, he

1. Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Aligarh 1864, p.347.

2. Religious Policy of the Mughal Rulers, p.68.

3. Badayuni, Vol.II, p.322,
Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Maktubat, Vol.II, Letter no.93.

4. Sujan Rai, p.425.

5. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, pp.212-13, 320.

participated in Hindu festivals and zealously celebrated Rakhi. Hindus came to the royal court and tied strings of threads on the Emperor's wrists on this occasion.¹ He also celebrated Dewali² and joined the celebration of Shivaratri.³ Afterwards, Akbar showed great respect for Hindu sentiments and many practical stop wee acted upon in this context. The situation came to such a lamenting point that he issued orders by putting a stop to the conversion to Islam from other religions.⁴ He permitted Hindus to convert to their faith such Hindus as had accepted Islam earlier.⁵ He also adopted a number of administrative measures of Hindus and Hinduism.

So far as the propagation of the Hindu teachings in Akbar's court is concerned, Badayuni informs us, "Brahmins who in all matters private and public are prior to all in receiving honour of serving and auspiciousness of company and who in their books of morals and traditional and -----

1. Sharma, op.cit., p.41.
2. Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, Calcutta 18 , Vol.I, p.216.
3. Badayuni, Vol.II, p.325.
4. Akbar Nama, Vol.II, p.154.
- 5.

fundamental sciences and in their religious devotions and ecstasies and human perfections are more reliable than the rest of the thinkers and devotees and are superior, put forward their arguments and proofs, rational as well as traditional to show the truth of their own religion and the multification of others. They consider the theories as fundamental principles which cannot be bleasted by any sceptic doubts and they succeeded in setting aside all notions of resurrection with all its details and traditional ideas which had prophetic light as their source. They also conveyed to his ears objections and criticisms on the brilliant easy religion and the bright Catholic ideas which are mentioned in the works of the adoption of their own creed through the expression of word and deed. At times they made Debi one of the annotators of Mahabharata sit on a charpoy which was pulled upto the chamber called the Khwabgah, (the bed-room). Debi used to explain the mysteries of the Indian stories, methods of worship of idols, fire, sun and stars and gods like Brahma, Mahadewa, Bishn, Krishn and Ram etc.¹

1. For details see Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, pp.256-58.

Akbar also seems to have been pleased and maintained relations with Zoroastrian priests and in 1578 he invited Dastur Maherji to his royal court who taught him Parsee doctrines, peculiar terms, ordinances, rites and ceremonies of his creed, laying stress above all on the reverence of sun and fire. Abul Fazl informs us of Akbar's reverence for fire and light, "The bright-hearted world illuminator (Akbar) considers the light of fire-worship, the subtle-minded wise one knows well. When the wise ones consider the worship of external forms the right mode, how can respect to this sublime element which is the source of the existence of human beings, be improper. And why should a man entertain such ruinous thought".¹ Akbar is also reported to have prayed before the fire after the style of the Zoroastrians.² He also reported the Parsee Calender, which also speaks of his learnings towards that religion.³

These increasing activities and thought of the Hindu rulers and preachers greatly annoyed Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. So far as the internal and private affairs of Hindus and

1. See Mehta, op.cit., p.42.

2. Ibid. ♀

3. Ibid., p.44.

Hinduism were concerned, Shaikh Ahmad did not at all interfere in it, because, according to the teachings of the Quran, he was of the opinion that both the people, Hindus and Muslim, should live peacefully by strictly following and adhering to their religious paths.¹ But when they came into conflict with Islam, its social and religio-political norms and principles, the Shaikh severely attacked them and even informed and warned the common Muslims, nobles and grandees, and the sufis and ulama of danger created by them.

We find Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, at various places in his maktubat-i-Imam-i Rabbani, to be raising voice against the increasing revivalist Hindu forces and cautioning his co-religionists (Muslims) to be alert and careful of their aims and intentions. In one of his letters, to Lala Beg, Shaikh Ahmad, describing the activities of the Hindus, says, "For about a century Islam is so oppressed that the infidels are not satisfied with the mere promulgation of the practices of the Kufr but they even desire Islamic norms and practices to be totally abolished, and Islam and Muslim completely rooted out. The situation is serious that if any Muslim follows the path of Islam, he is assassinated".² The Shaikh, in another

1. See Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letter 47.

2. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter 81.

letter, also illustrates the helplessness of the Muslims and the superiority of the Hindus during the reign of Akbar. He says, "In previous reign, the infidels (kafirs) were so powerful that they circulate the commands of infidelity in the land of Islam. And the Muslim were so helpless that they could not disseminate the teaching of Islam. And if they did so, they were assassinated".¹ Shaikh Ahmad further says, "The work of these wicked persons (kafirs) is nothing to laugh at Islam and Muslims. If they get opportunity, they make us abandon Islam or kill all of us or make us kafirs again".²

In another letter to Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka, during the reign of Emperor Jahangir, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi informs of the activities of the kafirs in these words, "The helplessness of Islam has come to this point that the infidels openly taunt and criticise Islam and Muslims. And they fearlessly propagate the commandments of the kufr and praise their gods and goddesses. The Muslims are unable to preach the laws of the Shariat; and if they do so, they are blamed and condemned".³

1. Ibid, Letter 47.
2. Ibid, Letter 163.
3. Ibid, Letter 65.

Bhakti movement was also one of the most significant development in the religious life of medieval India. It was essentially a revolt against religious discrimination, social inequality, caste distinction and ecclesiastical formalism. The main exponents of this movement were Kabir, Chaitanya, Dadu, Pipo and Dhanna. They all belonged to the low caste Hindu society. They were bitter critics of all caste concepts.¹

As many of the saints of the Bhakti school, had, at one stage or the other in their lives, came into contact with the Muslim saints, many Islamic ideas permeated their thought and behaviour.² They had been very influenced by the sufi concept of 'love of God', and 'humility'. Many other Islamic ideas and practices were adopted by these Bhakti saints. They generally used the medium of poverty and the language of common people to communicate their ideas. A number of Arabic and Persian words are found in their religious works. The Gurugranth, and the Dadupanthi and Niranjanpanthi literatures, for example, contain sayings of both Hindu and Muslim religious thinkers.

1. K.A.Nizami, Akbar and Religion, p.29.

2. Ibid., pp.29-30.

The Bhakti saints had a deep consciousness of their mission. Many of their ideas and thought had far-reaching socio-religious significance. They preached that all religious had some goal before them.¹ The spiritual mentor (guru) should be treated as the supreme authority.² They were of the view that the relationship between God and Man was the same as between waves and the sea. They believed that the transmigration of souls was the real cycle of life; and outward formalities of religions had no value. One should strive for the interiorization of religious rights.³

The frequent movement of the Bhakti saints and far-reaching influence of their thought also effected, to some extent, the Muslim society of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Many Muslims immature mystic mind felt attracted toward the Bhakti movement and its saints. Dadu's disciple Rajjabdas (1567-1689) is an interesting example of the impact of Bhakti cult on Muslim mind. He was Muslim with

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1. Gurmukh Singh, Nanak Prakas, pp.215-16.
Also, Muluk Daski Bani, p.27.
 2. Tara Chand, Influences of Islam on Indian Culture, Allahabad 1946, p.158.
 3. Akbar and Religion, pp.35-36.

Rajab Ali as his original name.¹ Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, therefore, could not reconcile to such ideas and activities. When a Hindu, Hirday Ram, sought his clarification on the sameness between God, Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, as Hindus believe. The Shaikh vehemently criticised this concept and told him, "It is foolishness to know Ram and Rahman as one. Creature cannot be equal to Creator".²

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1. For some time he had served in the army of Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh, and later joined the circle of Dadu Dayals followers (see Akbar and Religion, p.32).
 2. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letter No.167.

CHAPTER-II

BIRTH, EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

CHAPTER II

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Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi belonged to a distinguished family of saintly scholars of medieval India. Geneologically he was the descendant of Umar bin al-khattab,¹ the second Pious Caliph of Islam and attained twenty eighth position from him.² One of his ancestors, Shaikh Shahabuddin Ali, generally known as Farrukh Shah Kabuli, was among the great nobles and ministers of Sultans of Kabul.³ He is reported to

1. For his biography and other details see, Abu Jafer Ibn-i-Jarir Tabari, Tarikh-i-Tabari, Vols. I & II, (Its Urdu translations have appeared from Deoband in 1983/84). Also see, Shibli Numani, Al-Faruq, Shibli Academy, Azamgarh.
N.B. - Some historians have called Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi as Saiyyid Ahmad Sirhindi which is not correct. For instance see, Qiyamuddin Ahmad, Wahabi Movement in India, Calcutta, 1966, pp.12-13.
2. Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kashmi, Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, Kanpur 1890, pp.88-89.

Following is the geneological chain of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi;

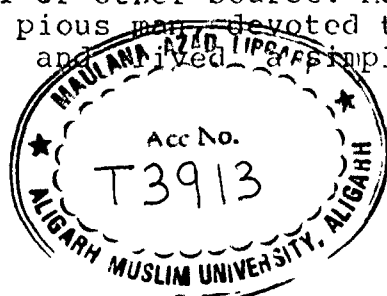
Shaikh Ahmad S/o Abdul Ahad Faruqi S/o Zainul Abidin S/o Abdul Haiy S/o Shaikh Muhammad S/o Habibullah S/o Imam Rafiuddin S/o Nasiruddin S/o Sulaiman S/o Yusuf S/o Ishaq S/o Abdullah S/o Shueb S/o Ahmad S/o Yusuf S/o Farrukh Shah Kabuli S/o Nasiruddin S/o Mahmud S/o Sulaiman S/o Masud S/o Abdullah al-Waiz al-Asghar S/o Abdullah al-Waiz al-Akbar, S/o Abul Fateh S/o Ishaq S/o Ibrahim S/o Nasir S/o Abdullah S/o Umar bin al-Khattab.

3. The later Naqshbandi tazkirahs call him a ruler of Kabul. (See, Khawja Kamaluddin Muhammad Ehsan, Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiyah (urdu translation), Lahore 1335, Part I, p.20. But the author of Zubdat-ul-Muqamat seems correct as no ruler of this name is mentioned in the history of Kabul. According to Amir Khurd, Farrukh Shah Kabuli belonged to the family of the rulers of Kabul. (See, Siyar-ul-Auliya, Delhi 1885, p.58).

have visited India with the army of Kabul as an important officer.¹ Farrukh Shah was known for his zeal for the propagation of Islam. The famous Chishti saint Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar² was also his descendant.³

An other great ancestor of Ahmad Sirhindi was Iman Rafiuddin⁴, a remote descendant of Farrukh Shah Kabuli and a Khalifa of Saiyyid Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari generally

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.88-89.
2. He was an eminent saint of the Chishti silsilah in India and the spiritual success of Shaikh Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki Aushi of Delhi. Born in a village near Multan, Baba Farid Gang-i-Shakar previously lived in Hansi but later he shifted to Ajodhan, now known as Pakpattan in Punjab. He holds a very high position among the first cycle of the Chishti saints in Indian sub-continent. Throughout his life he struggled for developing and popularizing the Chishti mystic trends and spent his time in prayer and meditation. He left a deep impact upon the Indian society and a large number of common people, Umara, Ulama and Sufis flocked to him and joined his mission. He died in 1265 in Ajodhan. For his detailed biography see; Siyar-ul-Aulioya, pp.58-91, Also; Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi, Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, Delhi, 1914, pp.55-59, Also; Ghauthi Shattari, Gulzar-i-Abrar, (Rotograph, No.174, Research Library, Department of History, A.M.U. Aligarh), f.13, Also; Jamali, Siyar-ul-Arifin, Delhi, 1893, pp.31-59, K.A. Nizami, The Life and Times of Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar Delhi 1955 (Reprint 1973) and Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-i-Chisht, Vol.I, Delhi 1979, pp.212-17, Also, S.M. Tkram, Aab-i-Kausar, Delhi 1987, pp.217-26.
3. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.89 (Almost all the Chishti sources give the same information in this context).
4. His biographical account is not available in any Naqshbandi or other source. According to Hashim Kishmi, he was a pious man devoted to religion and spiritual pursuits, and lived a simple and saintly life. See pp.89-90.



addressed as Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan.¹ When the letter was on his way to Delhi, Imam Rafiudding accompanied him and met the Sultan of Delhi, Firuz Shah Tughlaq. After some time the Sultan sent Iman Rafiuddin back to Sirhind and asked him to lay the foundation of a fortress and established a town there.²

1. Born on 15th Shaban 707/9th February 1308, he was an eminent Chishti as well as Suharwardi saint of medieval India and originally belonged to Bukhara in Central Asia but later on shifted to Uchch in Sindh after spending some time in Delhi. As a Chisti he had spiritual allegiance to Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi, and in Suharwardiyah silsilah, he was a khalifa of Shaikh Ruknuddin, the son and successor of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan. Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan is known as the chief saint of the Uchch branch of the Suharwardi order. He is reported to have deep impact on Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq. For details see, Siyar-ul-Arifin, pp.155-64, Also; Afif, Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, pp.514-16, Also; Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, pp.139-40, Also; K.A. Nizami, Salatin-i-Dehli ka Mazhabi Rujuhanat, Delhi 1981, p.359; and "The Suharwardi Silsilah and its influence on Medieval Indian Politics", Medieval India Quarterly, Vol.III, No.1 & 2, July-Oct. 1957, p.131.
2. According to Zubdat-ul-Maqamat when Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan and Imam Rafiuddin were enroute to Delhi, they passed through the village called Sirhind and made a sojourn there. Its people accorded a warm welcome to these saints and requested them to made a recommendation before Sultan Firuz Shah of Delhi for establishing a town there. On meeting the Sultan, who himself had come to receive and take them to his royal palace, they conveyed the message of the people of Sirhind to him. He accepted it and ordered to establish the proposed town. First he sent Khwaja Fatehullah, the elder brother of Imam Rafiuddin, to lay the foundation of a fortress and to supervise the construction work of the town. After some time he also asked Imam Rafiuddin to go to Sirhind. The Imam completed the town by obtaining the spiritual blessings of Shaikh Sharafuddin Bu Ali Shah Qalandar. For details see, Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.90. For Imam Rafiuddin's role and contribution to the establishment of Sirhind town also see; Fauja Singh, ed. Sirhind Through the Ages, Patiala 1972, p.14.

Ahmad Sirhindi's father Shaikh Ahad Faruqi¹ was the fifth descendant of Imam Rafiuddin.² He was a renowned sufi and scholar; and impressed his contemporaries by both his spiritual and scholarly approach to religion. He had established his own seminary at Sirhind which in time became a recognized centre of Islamic theology in northern India. A number of students from different parts of India, Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asia flocked around him to seek knowledge, and slake their spiritual thirst. Shaikh Abdul Ahad taught these students with devotion and love, enlightening and preparing them for the spiritual path.³ He is reported to have had thorough command over all mystic and

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1. It is important to note that Shaikh AbdulAhad Faruqi had not joined the Naqshbandi silsilah. He has wrongly been mentioned as "Naqshbandi" in some modern works. (See, S.A.A. Rizvi, Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India, p.202).

According to Zubdat-ul-Maqamat (see, p.116), the saint was very much desirous to be benefited from the Naqshbandi silsilah and its saints. But, as there was no great saint of this order in India at that time, Shaikh Abdul Ahad could not join the Naqshbandi silsilah. It is therefore, incorrect to consider or mention him as a Naqshbandi sufi.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.89.
3. Ibid., p.112.

trational works, especially the Fusus-ul-Hikam¹ of Shaikh Muhiuddin Ibn-i-Arabi² and Awarif-ul-Maarif³ of Shaikh

1. One of the most difficult works of Ibn-i-Arabi, written in 1230 in Arabic language, deals with the teachings of eminent prophets. The book is divided into twenty seven chapters, each chapter being named after a prophet. Every chapter contains an appropriate aspect of Sufisim. It has frequently been commented upon in Arabic by Shaikh Muwaiyyiduddin bin Muhammad al-Jindi, Shaikh Sadruddin al-Qunwi Daud bin Mahmud al-Qaisari, Maulana Abdur Rehman Jami, Shaikh Abdul Ghani al-Nablisi and Shaikh Abdul Razzaq Kashani. (See its urdu translation by Maulana Abdul Qadeer Siddiqi, Hyderabad, 1942, p.9). Moreover, many Arabic commentaries were produced in India also. Abul Muhasin Sharafuddin Dehlawi (ob. 1392) Ain-ul-Fusus Sharh-ul-Fusus; and Shaikh Pir Ali Muhaimi's (b. 1431) Sharh-ul-Khusus fi Sharh-ul-Fusus b 'Ibn-i-Arabi, and Fusus-ul-Na'am fi Sharh Fusus-ul-Hikam; Shaikh Ali Asghar Qannauji's (ob. 1140) Jawami-ul-Jakan fi Sharh Fusus-ul-Hikam; and Shaikh Imauddin Arif's Sharh-ul-Fusus; and Shaikh Nuruddin Ahmadabadis (ob. 1155) Tarikat-ul-Umam fi Sharh Fusus-ul-Hikam; and Bahrul Ulum Mulla Abdul Ali Firangi Mahli's, Sharh-ul-Fusus-un-Nahi min Fusus-ul-Hikam etc. For details see K.A. nizami, Tarikhi Maqalat, Delhi, 1966, pp.24-31.
2. Born on 17th Ramazan 560/28th July 1165 at Marisia in Spain, Shaikh Muhiyuddin Muhammad bin Ali bin Muhammad al-Arabi, better known as 'Shaikh-i-Akbar', belonged to the tribe "Bani Tai", and was a descent of 'Hatim Tai'. He visited a large part of the then Islamic World and stayed for a long time at Mecca and Madina, and finally settled in Demascus where he died in 638/1240-41. His tomb still exists there. For his biopgraphy and other details see, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Volume III, London & Leiden, 1971, pp.707-11; Also see, A.E. Afifi, The Mystical Philosophy of Muhiyuddin Ibn-i-Arabi, Cambridge 1939.
3. It has been used as manual for the study of Islamic mysticism by the sufis of all silsilah, and is considered one of the best works produced by Muslim saints. First printed at Cairo (Egypt) in 1888 on the margin of Imam Ghazali's Ihya-ul-Ulum-ud-Din. English translation by Wilberforce Clarke has appeared from Delhi in 1984.

Shahabuddin Suharwardi.¹ Abdul Ahad had a thorough command over the concept of Wahadat-ul-Wajud and taught it to his students with great zeal and pleasure, giving scholarly explanations of all subtleties.² He was a prolific writer also, and valuable works like Kanz-ul-Haqaiq³ and Asrar-i-

1. Born in 539/1145, he was the nephew, Khalifa and the spiritual successor of Shaikh Abun Najib Suharwardi. He studied under Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani and other eminent ulama and mashaikh of the time. Caliph al-Nasir is said to have highly regarded and sent him as his ambassador to the courts of Saifuddin Ayyubi al-Malik al-Adil I of Egypt; Alauddin Muhammad of Khwarizm Shah; and the Suljuq ruler of Quniya Alauddin Kay Qubaz I. The Shaikh visited extensively and went to Iran, Khurasan, Transoxiana, Syria and Turkey. He made several pilgrimages to Mecca and Madina. He produced many valuable works, the most popular was the Awarif-ul-Maarif. He died in Baghdad in 1234-35. For his details see; Abdur Rehman Jami, Nafahat-ul-Uns, Tehran 1918, p.472; Jalaluddin Husnai, Misbahul Haidaya, Tehran 1918, pp.28-32.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.113.

Makhtubat-i-Imam-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letter No.31, vol.II, Letter No.44. Makhtubat-i-Khwaja Masurm, Vol.II, Letter No.29.

3. According to Khawaja Hashim Kishmi, the treatise deals with tasuwwuf, and sheds valuable light on various spiritual themes. See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.117.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi has himself referred to the treatise in one of his brochures Risalah-i-Tahliliya, (Published from Karachi 1965, See, p.28).

Moreover, Ghauthi Shattari has also praised the scholarship and spiritual excellence of Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi Sirhindi. See, Gulzar-i-Abrar, (Urdu translation), Agra, p.500.

Tashahhud¹ reveal his profound understanding of the literature on Islamic scholasticism, as also his calibre for research.

Sheikh Abdul Ahad had been initiated into various sufi order.² Thus he was a Khalifa of Shaikh Ruknuddin³, the son -----

1. It was considered one of the standard works dealing with the ascension, (the nocturnal journey, or the Me'raj), of the Holy Prophet of Islam. It provides a scientific discussion on this aspect in Arabic language. The author of Zubdat-ul-Maqamat has given its opening and concluding paragraphs. See p.118-20.
2. It may be noted that it was the tradition in medieval period to be initiated into various sufi silsilah at a time Makhdum-i-Jahaniyan was also the member of both Chishti and Suhrawardi silsilahs. Similarly Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangoli belonged to two sufi orders, i.e. the Chishti, and the Qadiri.
3. Born on 5th March 1942, he was the spiritual successor of his father Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangoli. He had also spiritual allegiance to Saiyyid Ibrahim in the Qadiri silsilah. He resided permanently at Gangon where he died in 1575-6. For his accounts see, Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.101-2; Also, Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, p.222.
N.B. - The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat states that Shaikh Abdul Ahad, in his teenage, approached Shaikh Abdul Quddus and sought his spiritual guidance. But the latter advised him first to complete his formal traditional studies in Islamic theology and then to join his mystic discipline. Abdul Ahad thereupon submitted that since Shaikh Abdul Quddus had already reached a very old age, he was anxious that he might not be fortunate enough to find the saint alive on the completion of his education. The Shaikh answered Abdul Ahad to become a disciple of his son Ruknuddin in such circumstances, Abdul Ahad's fear proved to be right and when, on the completion of his theological studies, he reached Gangoli, he came to know that Shaikh Abdul Quddus was no more and his son had succeeded him. Thus Abdul Ahad became the disciple of and received Khilafat from Shaikh Ruknuddin. It is reported that Shaikh Abdul Quddus had directed Ruknuddin to enrol Abdul Ahad Faruqi Sirhindi in his mystic discipline, (See pp.92-96).

and successor of Shaikh Abdul Quddus gangohi¹, in the Chishti silsilah.² He also recieved the Khilafat in the Qadiriya order by the distinguished Shaikh Kamal Qadiri of Kaithal.³ He was also on friendly terms with Shaikh

1. He was the renowned saint of the Sabiriya branch of the Chishti silsilah. Shaikh Abdul Quddus received the Khilafat from and became the spiritual successor of Shaikh Muhammad, the son and successor of Shaikh Arif. The latter was the son and successor of Shaikh Abdul Haq of Rudauli. Shaikh Abdul Quddus, previously, himself resided at Rudauli but in 1491 A.D. he migrated to Shahabad near Ambala in Punjab where he lived for about thirty years of his life. Finally, in 1526, he settled down in Gangoli where he died in a ripe old age in 1536-37. He was on good terms with Sultan Sikandar Lodi, Ibrahim Lodi and Emperor Babur. He had spiritualallegiance to Darwesh Qasim Awadhi of the Suharwardi Silsilah as well. Among the works of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Anwar-ul-Uyun, Risalah-i-Qudsiya, Rushd Nama, Gharib-ul-Fawa'id and Mazhar-ul-Ajaib are very famous. He also wrote a commentary on Fusus-ul-Hikam of Muhiyuddin Ibn-i-Arabi. Moreover, the collection of his letters Maktubat-i-Quddusiyah deserves special mention. For his detailed accounts see, Shaikh Ruknuddin's Lataif-i-Quddusi, Delhi 1311 A.H.; Akhbarul Akhyar, pp.221-24; Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.97-101, Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-i-Chisht, Vol.I, pp.272-4.
2. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.92-96. It also contains the Khilafat Nama, Shaikh Ruknuddin had given to Shaikh Abdul Ahad.
3. He was an eminent saint of the Qadiri silsilah in India and held a very high and most prestigious position after the foundation of the silsilah Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad. Shaikh Kamal resided at Kaithal, a village situated near Sirhind and played very important role in dissemination of the Qadiri silsilah in India. He died in 1573 and was buried in his own village. Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi was very much close to him and they both frequently visited each other. See Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.305-8.

Jalaluddin Thanesari.¹

As a devout sufi, Shaikh Abdul Ahad pilgrimaged to various cities and called on eminent saints of different silsilahs.² Thus he went to Rohtas where he came into contact with many saints especially Muhammad bin Fakhr³ and profitted by his association. There he studied Quranic sciences and received spiritual training. He also visited Bengal and met eminent sufis there⁴, including Shaikh Burhan⁵, a saint who spent most of his time in meditation and prayer. On his way back, Abdul Ahad stayed in Jaunpur⁶

1. Born in 1469-70, he as a distinguished Khalifa of Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangoli. Emperor Akbar is said to have paid a visit to his Khanqah and obtained his blessings on his way to Kabul in 1581. Throughout the life he was devoted to meditation, prayer, Zikr and Sama. He is also reported to have written a treatise on Sama and another work entitled Irshad-ut-Taabin. He died in 1582 and was succeeded by his son-in-law Nizamuddin Thanesari bin Abdush Shakur. For his details see, Zubdat-ut-Maqamat, p.103; Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-i-Chisth, Vol.I, p.280.
2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.110.
3. Originally belonged to Jaunpur, Muhammad bin Fakhr was known among the famous ulama of the first half of the sixteenth century. He is reported to have produced many theological and polemical works including a commentary on Qazi Shahabuddin Daulatabadi's Kafia-i-Ibn-ul-Hajib. For his accounts, see Saiyyid Abdul Haiy Hasani, Nuzhat-ul-Khawatir, Part IV, Hyderabad 1973, p.209.
4. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.111.
5. His biography and other details are hitherto unknown.
6. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.112.

to meet and benefit from his association with Saiyyid Ali Qawam¹, a khalifa of Shaikh Bahauddin Jaunpuri.²

Once Abdul Ahad sojourned to Sikandara, a town near Etawah in present Uttar Pradesh with the intention of preaching Islam. Here he came into contact with an old pious lady who was tremendously impressed by his spiritual and moral excellence. She requested Abdul Ahad to marry her younger sister, who herself was a pious woman. After some initial hesitation, Abdul agreed, and married the lady. He remained at Sikandara for some more time and then left for Sirhind alongwith his wife.³

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1. He originally belonged to a distinguished Sayyid family of Sawat in Punjab but in his youth he migrated to Jaunpur and joined the mystic discipline of Shaikh Bahauddin. Though he had passed his boyhood and the young age with an aristocratic bearing, yet he gave up all the luxuries and adopted a life of seclusion and meditation. It is stated that he did not like to be served and for forty years he didn't ask any person to do any of his personal works. He died in 950/1542 and was buried in Sarai Amiran, a town in the vicinity of Jaunpur. (But now in Azamgarh district). See Dara Shukoh, Safinat-ul-Auliya, (Urdu) Deoband, pp.226-7.
 2. He was a famous Chishti saint of Jaunpur and owed spiritual allegiance to Shaikh Muhammad Isa, a spiritual descendant of Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh of Delhi. For his details see, Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, p.189; Also Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya (Urdu) Part I, p.31; Also, Enamul Haq, Sufi Movement in Bengal, Indo-Iranica, Vol.III, No.I, July 1948, p.19.
 3. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.126.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was born on Friday, the 14th Shawwal¹ 971 A.H./ 26th May 1564 A.D. at Sirhind.² His father named him Abul Barakat Badruddin Ahmad³. As the father was devoted to Shaikh Kamal Qadiri of Kaithal, he took the infant to the Saint who was staying in Sirhind at that time, and obtained his blessings and spiritual favours.⁴

1. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiyah, (Urdu) Part I, Lahore 1335, p.53- (It may be mentioned that no contemporary chronicle has given any specific date of Ahmad Sirhindi's birth. They give only the month and the year concerned).

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.127; Also, Badruddin Sirhindi, Hazarat-ul-Quds, Volume II, Lahore 1971, p.31. N.B.: Hashim Kishmi gives the chronogramic term "KHASHE" which reveals 971 A.H.

It is to be noted that all the primary and later works state that many great saints of different silsilahs had long before predicted Ahmad Sirhindi's appearance and his revivalist efforts.

3. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiyah (Urdu), Part I, p.54.

4. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.127.

It may be noted that Ahmad Sirhindi's mother also held Shaikh Kamal in high esteem. Once, in his infancy, Shaikh Ahmad fell ill very seriously. The mother would remain distressed and anxious. She therefore reported Shaikh Kamal and sought his spiritual blessing for her son's recovery. The saint asked that her son would gain health and fully recovered. He also told her that Shaikh Ahmad would survive upto considerable long time and become a great divine and mystic of his age as Almighty Allah had created him for an important religious task. Shaikh Kamal also predicted that many renowned sufis and ulama would become Shaikh Ahmad's followers. It appears that Shaikh Kamal loved Ahmad Sirhindi like his own son. The latter was eight or ten years' old when Shaikh Kamal Qadiri passed away and throughout his life he deeply associated himself with the spiritual excellence of the saint. He would always remember Shaikh Kamal, with deep respect and sincerity, and pronounced his name with profound love and devotion.

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Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi received his early education from his illustrious father and the ulama of Sirhind¹, and very quickly gained proficiency in different subjects, committing the Holy Quran to memory², and acquiring knowledge of Islamic sciences. After this he proceeded to Siyalkot, an important seat of Islamic learnings in those days, and there studied some advanced works of tafseer and Hadith like Azdi and imthala, all under the special guidance of Maulana Kamal Kashmiri.³ Later he came into contact with yet another

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f.n. no.4 contd.

Sirhindi used to say that in the Qadiriya silsilah Shaikh Kamal was the greatest saint after its founder Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad. Shaikh Ahmad fully bore to mind Shaikh Kamal's face and personal appearance (looks). He also completely kept in mind the house where he (Shaikh Kamal) used to stay at Sirhind.

1. Zubdat-ul Maqamat, p.128, Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.31.
2. Though all the contemporary later sources give the same information but one of Ahmad Sirhindi's own letters reveals that he memorised the Holy Quran during his imprisonment in the Gwalior fort. See Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.III, Letter No.43; Also, Muhammad Masud Ahmad, Sirat-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani, Karachi 1976, p.51.
3. Shaikh Kamaluddin bin Musa al-Hanafi al-Kashmiri, commonly called Maulana Kamal Kashmiri was a famous alim of Kashmir who migrated to Siyalkot in 971/1563 where he established a seminary in which a number of students studied Logic, Philosophy, Scholasticism and Jurisprudence. Despite Ahmad Sirhindi, Maulana Abdul Hakeem Siyalkoti, himself a famous qiyas, also studied under him. Maulana Kamal Kashmiri died in 1010/1601 and was buried in Lahore. See, Nuzhat-ul-Khawarir, Part V, Hyderabad, 1976, p.326.

renowned scholar Yaqoob Sarafi Kashmiri¹, and acquired still more knowledge of Hadith from him.² Sirhindi also went to Qazi Behlul Badakhshani³, under whose supervision he studied

1. Born in 908/1501-2 in Kashmir, he was one of the renowned scholar and ulama of his time and a well-known poet as well. He was the spiritual successor of great Kubrawi saint Shaikh Husain Khwarizmi, and he acquired honour by performing the pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina. He received from Ibn-i-Hajar the authority to give instructions in Hadith. As a great alim he travelled much and visited most of the Shaikhs of Arab and Persia, and profited much by his intercourse with them. He received authority to assume the prerogatives of a religious teacher and spiritual guide, and as such he had many disciples in India and Kashmir. He died on 18th Zeeqad 1003/25th July 1595. He was the author of some sublime and beautiful works, and wrote many treatises. He was illustrious and much relied upon as an authority in all branches of Islamic learning, and is said to have written a commentary on the Holy Quran, which was one of the most wonderful production of his perfect genius. See, Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh, Vol.III, pp.142-9; Also Abdul Qaiyyum Rafiqi, Sufism in Kashmir, Delhi 1976, pp.116-24.

It may be mentioned that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi had also joined the mystic discipline of and received Khilafat from Shaikh Yaqoob Sarafi in the Kubrawiya and Suharwardiya silsilahs. See, Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.32; Masud Ahmad, op.cit., p.58.

It may also be mentioned that Yaqoob Sarafi had deeply influenced and laid great impression upon Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. It was due to his association with Yaqoob Sarafi, that Sirhindi always insisted on the Prophet's sunnah and voiced against Shite sect and ideology which he considered to be anti-Islamic. It might be possible that he wrote his Risala Radd-i-Rawafiz under his teacher's deep influence. (For Shaikh Yaqoob Sarafi's anti-Shia activities, see, Sufism in Kashmir, pp.221-2).

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.128.
3. No contemporary or later work gives any detail of Qazi Behlul Badakhshani. Hashim Kishmi only says that he studied under Shaikh Abdur Rehman bin Fahd, a great scholar of Hadith in Hedjaz, and was himself known for scholarship in Hadith. See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.128.

Tafseer-i-Wahidi¹, Tafseer-i-Baizawi², Sahih-al-Bukhari³,
Mishkat-i-Tabrizi⁴, Shamail-i-Tirmizi⁵, Jame ' Sagheer-i-
Siyuti⁶, Qasida-i-Burda⁷ and Mishkat-ul-Masabih⁸. And thus
 Sirhindi acquired command of all religious sciences, and was

 1&2. Both are the famous exegesis of the Holy Quran and still
 are taught in the Muslim theological institutions.

3. The most important collection of the Prophet's traditions. compiled by Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari (ob. 256/870) and has been an authentic source of Ilm-ul-Hadith among the ulama of Islam for several centuries. Its real name is 'al-Jami al-Sahih al-Musnad al-Mukhtasar min Umur-i-Rasul Allah'. The author has selected seven thousand traditions after working hard for about sixteen years. It is said that before he selected a Hadith, he would prostrate and seek God's help as to the truth of the recorded tradition.
4. Also a collection of the Prophet's traditions.
5. Another famous collection of Hadith compiled by Imam Tirmizi.
6. It is one of the most important text included in the syllabus of Islamic theology.
7. A celebrated poem composed by al-Busiri. Its verses are supposed to have some supernatural power. No other Arabic poem has attained such renown. Near about ninety commentaries of it in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Berber are said to have been written so far.
8. It is also a famous collection of Hadith, compiled by Abu Muhammad al-Husain bin Masud bin Muhammad al-Baghawi (ob. 510/1116-7), a renowned Shafite scholar of Hadith. It contains 4436 Hadith and was first published in 733/1336-7 by Waliuddin bin Abdullah al-Khatib al-Tabrizi. Its first English translation by A.N. Mathews appeared in 1810 from Calcutta. In 1960 another English translation by James Robson, of the Arabic Department in Manchester University was published from London and Pakistan. The Urdu translation of Mishkat-ul-Masabih has also recently appeared from Delhi.

at the young age of seventeen an, erudite scholar and divine.¹ It is reported that Sirhindi also had contact with the eminent scholar of Hedith Shaikh Abdur Rehman.²

Thus fully equipped, Ahmad Sirhindi himself started imparting instruction at Sirhind, and overnight his name and fame spread through the length and breadth of Mughal Empire. Students poured in, joining his seminary and benefiting from his scholarly and divine guidance. He imparted with great zeal and devotion, by explaining the subtle intricacies of Islamic theology.³

In 990/1582, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi went to Agra and stayed there for a considerable length of time.⁴ At Agra,

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.32

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.128.

3. Ibid., p.129.
Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.32.

4. The exact period of Sirhindi's stay at Agra is not known. According to Ghulam Mustafa Khan the saint reached there in 990/1583, (See, Makhtubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Turkish edition, Istanbul 1977, p.602). It seems correct as Sirhindi completed his education in 998/1580 at the age of seventeen, and spent few years in imparting education at Sirhind. Then he went to Agra. Both Faizi and Abul Fazl had joined the Mughal Court in 975/1567 and 981/1574 respectively. So far as Ahmad Sirhindi's departure from Agra is concerned, nothing is known as to when he left for Sirhind. The Zubdat-ul-Muqamat. Only says that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi had been in Agra for a long time. But it does not give any specific period. It further says that when he did not return home for a long

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which was the Capital, Sirhindi pondered over the unhappy political situation, as well as the deteriorating religious environment at the Mughal Court. He also contacted eminent nobles of the time.¹ At Agra also Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi wrote an Arabic treatise, Ithbat-un-Nubuwwah.

At Agra Ahmad Sirhind came into contact with Faizi and Abul Fazl. Both had great regard for the Shaikh and held him in high esteem. He frequently visited these brothers and

f.n. no.4 contd.

time, his father Shaikh Abdul Ahad reached Agra and asked him to return home; (see, p.133). A modern writer Yohanan Friedmann rightly says that Ahmad Sirhindi stayed at Agra for an unspecified period, (See, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, London 1971, p.XIII). Another modern scholar Muhammad Masud Ahmad thinks that Sirhindi stayed at Agra from 990/1583 to 1000/1593; (See, Sirat-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani, p.280). But it does not seem correct as according to both Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, and Hazarat ul-Quds, Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq, the eldest son of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, was born in 1000/1593 in Sirhindi and the latter was present there at that time; (See Z.M., p.300, H.O., p.220). It appears that he left Agra at the end of 998/1591 or in the beginning of 999/1592 because in his way to Sirhind, he had married Shaikh Sultan Thanesaris daughter (See, Infra p.....). Thus the period of Sirhindi's stay at Agra can be specified from 990/1583 to 998/1591, eight years.

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1. Friedmann says that Sirhindi had been invited to the Mughal Court, (see Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, p.XIII). But the Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyamiya tells us that the intention of the saint visit to Agra was to meet eminent ulama and scholars who had taken abode in the Mughal capital. See, p.62). It seems correct.

discussed various subjects with them. Once he sat with Abul Fazl discussing the importance of Philosophy, especially the Greek philosopher, their metaphysical thought and rational approach. Abul Fazl supported these philosophers, and defended them, whereas Ahmad Sirhindi opposed them and criticised their views and thought. He strongly argued and quoted Imam Ghazali.¹ saying, "The greek philosophers have nothing their own. Most of their learnings have been plagiarised from the ancient scriptures of the early prophets. Their own inventions, logic and Mathematics are useless for Islam."² Then Abul Fazl called Imam Ghazali stupid, and his thought as irrational. Annoyed by this comment against a highly esteemed religious scholar, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi left him, saying that if Abul Fazl did not know how to behave himself, he should not sit in scholarly gatherings and talk about knowledge and sciences. Thereafter he did not meet Abul Fazl for a few days and avoided his company and refrained from discussions with him. Finally

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1. For biography and philosophy of Imam Muhammad al-Ghazali see; Shibli Numani, Al-Ghazali (Urdu), Azamgarh (Reprint) 1966; and Muhammad Umaruddin, The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazali, Aligarh 1962.
 2. For Imam Ghazali's views in this context, see, Ihya-ul-Ulum-ud-Din, Cairo 1888; English translation by Fazl-ul-Karim, vol.I, Delhi 1984, pp.29-118.

Abul Fazl apologized to and invited him to his residence.¹

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was also on friendly terms with Faizi and visited his house very often. Faizi was also highly impressed by Shaikh Ahmad's crude personality and sincerely regarded his poetry and scholarship. It is said that once the Shaikh went to Faizi's residence and found him writing Quranic exegesis, Sawati-ul-Ilham² in dotted words. Faizi had discontinued the transfer because he found himself involved in certain intricacies he could not unravel. So Faizi sought the Shaikh's help. Though the Shaikh himself was not in the habit of writing in undotted words, he solved Faizi's problem and wrote a few pages. This greatly surprised Faizi.³

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.131-2.

Hashim Kishmi says that he got this information from a pupil of AbulFazl whom he met personally.

2. A commentary on the holy Quran without any dotted letter. It has been characterised by critics to be almost a "useless piece of Arabic writing. It was completed in 1002/1593. It is reported that on its completion many contemporary ulama raised their voice and submitted petition against its author, but on Faizi's satisfactory remarks, they withdrew themselves, See, Muntakheb-ut-Tawarikh, Volume IIII, p.300). Also, Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin, Vol.I, Karachi 1961, pp.64-65; Also, The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.II, p.871.

3. As Badayuni says that Faizi composed Sawati-ul-Ilham in a state of drunkenness and ritual impurity, (See, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.III, p.300), some modern scholars write that thus the claim of Sirhindi's followers, that he collaborated in the completion of one of its parts, seems untenable. (See, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.II, p.871). It may be mentioned in this context that no contemporary authority has made any claim in this regard. The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat and the Hazarat-ul-Quds state that Sirhindi helped Faizi only on one occasion, as has been described above, and wrote only few pages.

The author of Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya says that during his stay at Agra, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi fascinated a number of Muslim Ulama and scholars by his captivating scholarship. They attended his lectures and studied tafseer and Hadith with him. Even top officials and military men attended to their advantage.¹

It was around the end of 998/1591 or the beginning of 994/1592 that the Shaikh's father Makhdum Abdul Ahmad Faruqi reached Agra, from Sirhind, to meet his son as he had not seen Shaikh Ahmad for some years, and asked him to leave Agra and return to Sirhind.² Consequently the Shaikh left Agra for Sirhind, and enroute passed through Thanesar, where the father and the son met Shaikh Sultan Thanesari³, who

1. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyamiya (Urdu) Part I, p.62.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.133.

3. Badayuni has given the following account of Shaikh Sultan Thanesari;

He acquired the honour of performing the pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina and was well-versed in those branches of learning which depend on the memory. For a long time he was in the imperial services, and worked for four years, alone and without any co-adjustor, in the project of the translation of Mahabharata which is known as the Ramz Nama, and what was begun by Najib Khan, was finished by him. On account of an accusation of the crime of cow-killing, which was brought against him by the Hindus of Thanesar, an order was issued for his banishment of Bakkar. Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan who was in those days incharge of the Suba of Multan, treated him with great consideration and kindness. He took Shaikh Sultan with him and promised to procure that reversal of the sentence of banishment

accorded them a warm welcome, and even arranged, after due negotiations, to marry her daughter to Shaikh Ahmad.¹ Thereafter they returned to Sirhind, where the Shaikh Ahmad started his family life. In the mean time he fell ill very seriously. The illness caused acute weakness but gradually he recovered. In Sirhind, Shaikh Ahmad imparted education to the students in his ancestral seminary, and spent most of the time in offering prayer and meditation. He would serve his old father and attend him with great love, sincerity and care. Very often he consulted Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi, his father, in various matters of Islamic tehology and mysticism and made discussions with him on various topics of Quranic sciences, Hadith, fiqh, Kalam and tasawwuf. The father himself imparted Ahmad Sirhindi the intricacies of spiritual process of different sufi silsilahs. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi -----
f.n. no.3 contd..

which had been passed against him. Haji Sultan returned secretly to his native place, and Khan-i-Khanan, after conquerring Asirgarh and Burhanpur, prayed in one of his petitions for the reversal of the sentence against him. His request was granted and Emperor Akbar ordered Abul Fazl to appoint him the Karori of Thanesar and Karnal, (See, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.III, pp.118-9).

According to Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, Shaikh Sultan was hanged to death by the order of Emperor Akbar in some false accusation. (See its Urdu translation, Part I, p.36).

- 1. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, Part I (Urdu), p. 68

It is reported that Shaikh Sultan Thanesari had already been spiritually instructed in a vision by the Holy Prophet of Islam to give his daughter in marriage to Shaikh Ahmad Sihindi. Shaikh Sultan had also been informed, through the vision, of the face and looks of Shaikh Ahmad.

studied Fusus-ul-Hikam, Futuh-at-i-Makkiya and Awarif-ul-Maarif under his father's scholarly and spiritual guidance. It appears that the main theme of Sheikha Abdul Ahad's teaching to his son was the concept of Wahadat-ul-Wujud or the Unity of Being. Moreover, the Makhadum initiated his son, Ahmad Sirhindi, into his own mystic discipline and conferred the philafat in the Chistiya, Suharwardiya and the Qadiriya silsilahs upon him by declaring him his spiritual successor.¹

In 1000 A.H./1591 A.D. Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq, the eldest son of the Shaikh, was born in Sirhind.² In the meantime, most probably in 1002/1593-4, Sirhindi wrote his other treatise Radd-i-Rawafiz which refutes the Shia sect and ideology.³ It was the month of Shaban 1005/March 1597 that Sirhindi's second son Khwaja Muhammad Saeed was born.⁴ Two years later on Wednesday, the 17th Jamad I 1007/6th December 1598 his father Abdul Ahad Faruqi passed away at the ripe age of eighty years.⁵ Shaikh Ahmad was now

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1. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Mabda'-wa-Maad, Karachi, 1984, pp.9-10.
 2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.300.
 3. see, Introduction.
 4. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.309.
 5. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, Part I (Urdu), p.33.
Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.121-22.

unanimously accepted as the spiritual head of his father's disciples and followers.¹ In the the very same year, on Friday 11th Shawal/27th April 1599, the third son of Shaikh Ahmad Khwaja Muhammad Masum was born². Risala-i-Tahliliya³, another brochure of the Shaikh, is also reported to have been compiled in 1007/1599⁴.

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1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, Vol.II, p.33.
Mabdu-o-Maad, pp.9-10.
Akhbar-ul-Akhyar,
p.306; Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, Part I,
pp.30-37.
 2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.315.
 3. For details see, Introduction.
 4. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.131.

CHAPTER-III

INITIATION INTO THE NAQSHBANDI ORDER BY KHWAJA BAQI BILLAH

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BILLAH

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, since his very youth, had keen interest in performing Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and visiting the mausolium of the holy Prophet at Madina. But on account of his father's old age, continuous illness and deteriorating health, he was not able to leave him alone as he had to look after and take care of him. As mentioned earlier, it was 17th Jamada II 1007/ 5th January 1599, that Shaikh Abdul Ahad passed away at Sirhind. Now, after some time, Shaikh Ahmad decided to fulfil his years old desire and achieve his goal, the performance of Hajj. He therefore left Sirhind in order to start his pious journey. It was the month of Rabi II 1008/October 1599 that Ahmad Sirhindi, enroute to Mecca and Madina, reached Delhi and stayed with Maulana Hasan Kashmiri¹, one of the fast friends and class fellow during his studies at Siyalkot. The Maulana informed Shaikh Ahmad of a saint, Khwaja Baqi Billah, who had recently come to and settled down in Delhi, and even become popular among the local people. The inhabitants of Delhi,

1. He originally belonged to Kashmir but permanently resided at Delhi where he himself had joined the mystic discipline of Khwaja Baqi Billah. For details see Nuzhat-ul-Khawahir, Part 5, p.134

whether common people, government officials, sufis and ulama, frequently visited his Khanqah to obtain his spritual blessings. Hasan Kashmiri emphasised Shāikh Ahmad Sirhindi to meet Khwaja Baqi Billah and even took him to the saint.

Khwaja Baqi Billah

Khwaja Baqi Billah holds an important position in the annals of Islam in India. He left deep impressions upon the contemporary society and caused a great change in the religious environment of the country. His main contribution is to bring together many eminent personalities of the time - religious and political, under his own mystic discipline by attracting them to the basic sources of Islamic thought. It is not an exaggeration to say that if Baqi Billah had not come to Delhi, the great person Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi would not have appeared in the religious scene of the seventeenth century. It was the Khwaja who inspired Ahmad Sirhindi to initiate a movement throughout the country for the revivalism of Islamic Laws, i.e. Shariat, and values. Professor K.A. Nizami is rightly of the opinion that the personality of Khwaja Baqi Billah was the source of all the latter Muslim revivalist movements in Indian sub-continent.¹

1. Hayat-i-Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi, Delhi, 1964, p.134.

Syed Raziuddin, Commonly called Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah, was born² on day, the 5th Zil Hijja 971 A.H./16th December 1563 A.D. in Kabul.¹ His father Qazi Abdus Salam, geneologically a Quraishi Syed, was famous for his peity and scholarsip and originally belonged to Samargand.² From his mother's side Khwaja Baqi Billah was a descendant of Shaikh Umar Yaghistani (ob.698/1298)³ who was the maternal grand father of Khwaja Obaidullah Ahrar⁴, a well-known Naqshbandi saint of Central Asia.

Since his very boyhood Khwaja Baqi Billah was devoted to seclusion and meditation.⁵ He started his formal and

1. Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.5.
2. Ibid. Also, Badruddin Sirhindi, Hazarat-ul-Quds (Urdu Translation), Vol.I, Lahore 1343, p.215.
3. Sheikh Umar Yaghistani belonged to Baghistan, a town situated near Tashqand, and geneologically he was the seventh descendant of Umar al-Faruq, the second Pious Caliph of Islam. Sheikh Umar's tomb is still in Tabrez in Central Asia. For details see, Ali bin Husain al-Waiz al-Kashifi, Rashahat-i-Ain-ul-Hayat, Kanpur 1911, pp.208-9.
4. Also an important saint of Central Asia. He left a deep impact on his contemporaries specially the rulers and occupies a significant place in the history of Islam in that region. For his biographical and other details see Kashifi, op.cit., pp.220-30.
5. Hazarat-ul-Quds (Urdu), Vol.I, p.215.

traditional education under Maulana Sadiq Halwai¹, a renowned scholar of Central Asia, and, within a very short span of time, distinguished himself amongst the students. Even before he completed his education, he was so well-versed in different sciences that he could easily explain controversial points of Islamic theology.² He also accompanied his teacher Transoxiana where he met and benefited from a number of sufi-saints.³

The contemporary sources reveal that Khwaja Baqi Billah spent a considerable long time in his mystic travels. He visited Hindustan and met his relatives who held high positions in the army. They even persuaded him to join the army but he declined.⁴ He went to Lahore and kept the

1. Maulana Sadiq Halwai was among the leading divines of Transoxiana. On his return from Mecca, after Hajj, he made a sojourn at Kabul on the request of Mirza Muhammad Hakim, the ruler of Afghanistan. Baqi Billah came into contact with him during this period. He is also reported to have visited India during the reign of Emperor Akbar and return home in 972/1564-5. See Muhammad Baqa, Mirat-i-Jahan Numa (MS.) (British Museum/Rotograph in the Research Library, Department of History, A.M.U. Aligarh), f.273a.
2. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, P. 6
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, pp.6-7.

company of eminent saints. He studied some mystic literature there which kindled in him a love for Tasawwuf Islamic mysticism. He carried on vigorously his search for truth despite heavy odds and did not relinquish his desire to find out mashaikh i.e. Muslim saints. Incidentally he came into contact with a majzub who influenced him very deeply.¹ It is reported that India Khwaja Baqi Billah also journeyed through the region of Sambhal, presently a tehsill in the modern Moradabad district, and called on Shaikh Allah Bakhsh². Who was a khalifa of Syed Ali Qawam of Jaunpur.³

Thereafter he returned to Afghanistan and again travelled in Central Asia. Ultimately he came back to kabul and joined his mother who was worried and distressed at his

1. Ibid., p.8.

N.B. It may be mentioned that traditional accounts of eminent founders of different silsilahs almost invariably contain story of contact with mystic essentries. Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti also is reported to have been influenced by a majzub. See, Siyar-ul-Arifin (Rotograph in History Research Library, A.M.U.).

2. He resided at 'Garh Mukteshwar', a town in the present Meerut district of U.P., and died there in 1002/1593. For his biographical details see Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.III, p.58. Also Nasim Ahmad Faridi, Tazkira-i-Khwaja Baqi Billah, Lucknow 1978, p.15.

3. Syed Ali Qawam, a famous Chishti saint, was a khalifa of Shaikh Badruddin of Jaunpur, a spiritual descendant of Shaikh Nasiruddin Charagh of Delhi. For his details see Safinat-ul-Auliya, p.190.

long absence and poor health.¹ Later on, he again left for Samarqand where he met Shaikh Iftikhar² and Khwaja Obaid³. He also called on Amir Abdullah Balkhi⁴ and benefited from his spiritual discourses. He is also reported to have been inspired during these days by the spirit of Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband.⁵ Throughout his stay at Samarqand Baqi Billah whole heartedly devoted himself to meditation and spiritual exercises.⁶ Then he proceeded to Kashmir and remained there

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, P. 8.
All Naqshabandi Mujaddidi sources refer to her as a pious Syed lady who was keenly devoted to the religion and the service of the saints. She is also reported to have accompanied Baqi Billah to Delhi where he settled down permanently. See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.8-9.
2. He was descendant of Khwaja Ahmad Yaswi, the founder of the silsilah-i-Khwajgan. See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.8-9.
3. Khwaja Obaid was a Khalifa of Maulana Lutufullah, a follower of Khajgi Dahidi who resided near Samarqand. See Safinat-ul-Auliya, p.
4. Also famous saint of Central Asia. No details is available in historical records.
5. Born in 718/1318 at Qasr-i-Arifin near Bukhara, Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband was the founder of Naqshbandi silsilah. Since his early boyhood he was keenly devoted to spiritual practices and meditation. Later he became a disciple of Syed Amir Kulal (ob. 772/1564). He also benefited from the spirit of Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Ghajdwani. Khwaja Bahauddin strictly followed the Shariat and practices according to Hanafite school. For his details, see Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami, Nafahat-ul-Uns, Calcutta, 1968, pp.439-53. Also, Rashahat, pp.53-55, Safinat-ul-Auliya, p.78.
6. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.10.

for about two years in the company of Shaikh Baba Wali.¹ When the latter died in 1001/1592, Khwaja Baqi Billah returned to Central Asia via Lahore² and came into contract with Maulana Khwajgi Amkangi³ who lived in Amkana, a town in the vicinity of Samargand. He was so highly impressed by

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1. A Naqshbandi saint and a khalifa of Shaikh Husain Khwarizmi, Baba Wali belonged to Khwarizm. He also joined the mystic discipline of Shaikh Muhammad Kubrawi. He came to Kashmir in 999/1590-1 and stayed at the Khangah of Syed Ali Hamadani. In Kashmir he attracted a large number of people and became asylum for all of them. When Mirza Yadgar rebelled against Emperor Akbar, Baba Wali vehemently criticised him and predicted a great success of Akbar. It is said that Mirza Yadgar had given poison to him. He died in 1001/159. For details see Ghulam Sarwar Lahori, Khazinat-ul-Asfiya, Vol.II, Kanpur, 1914, p.337. Also Muhammad Azam Shah, Waqiat-i-Kashmir, Lahore, 1303, p.110.
 2. But according to Shah Waliullah, Khwaja Baqi Billah, after the death of Shaikh Baba Wali, came to Delhi and made a sojourn at the khangah of Shaikh Abdul Aziz (.....) whose son and successor Shaikh Qutb-ul-Alam warmly received and gave him spiritual training. Shaikh Qutb-i-Alam also conferred his Khilafat in the Chishti discipline upon Baqi Billah and exhorted him to go to Central Asia and meet eminent saints there. See Anfas-ul-Arifin (Urdu Translation), Deoband, p.353. N.B.: The contemporary records especially Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, and Mazarat-ul-Quds provide no such information and say that from Kashmir Khwaja Baqi Billah returned to Central Asia.
 3. Maulana Khwajgi Amkangi was an eminent Naqshbandi saint of Central Asia. He was disciple and Khalifa of his father Maulana Derwish Muhammad. Maulana died in a ripe age of ninety years in 1008/1599 in Amkana, a town near Samargand. See H.Q. (Urdu) Vol.I, pp.210-13. N.B.: As Rashahat was completed in 909/1503-04, it does not supply any information of Maulana Amkangi who flourished in later period.

the spiritual attainments of Maulana Amkangi that he joined his mystic discipline.¹ Though he underanother journey to Transoxiana and called on some sufi saints but soon he returned to Samarqnad where he kept he company of his spiritual mentor and received Khilafat from him. The Maulana directed him to proceed towards India and patronize the Naqshbandhi silsilah there.² In compliance with his pirs orders, Khwaja Baqi Billah left for India and stayed at Lahore for fourteen months.³

Finally he reached and settled down in Delhi in 1008/1599. It was the time when Islamic orthodoxy had been suppressed by the Mughal Emperor. Baqi Billah established a Khanqah near the Firuzi Fort and and devoted himself to the

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.11.
2. It is reported that once Khwaja Baqi Billah saw a dream that a beautiful bird was sitting on his hand and he was poaring the saliva of his mouth into her beak. In return, the bird gave him the particles of sugar. When next morning the Khwaja related the dream to his spiritual mentor, he told him that such type of bird was found in India. He said to Baqi Billah that he should go to Hindustan and propagate the Naqshbandi silsilah there. Maulana Amkangi also foretold that in India Baqi Billah would come into contact with a great spiritual and religious personality of the time who would join his mystic discipline. See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.140.
3. Ibid.

popularity of the Naqshbandi silsilah. His influence soon spread and a large number of people flocked to him.¹ Most of his time was spent either in prayer and meditation or in teaching and reforming his visitors and followers.² Both Zubdat-ul-Maqamat and Hazrat-ul-Quds state that Khwaja Baqi Billah was a quiet man who led a simple and secluded life and did not like publicity of his spiritual attainments. When asked to clarify and explain any mystic problem, he spoke exhaustively and convincingly. His replies gave evidence of his deep knowledge and cogent reasoning.³ Whosoever approached him, was highly impressed by his qualities of head and heart and above all his humility had a tremendous impact on his visitors. He generally avoided enlisting seekers to his own mystic discipline and advised them to find out some other suitable guide. He went to the extent of saying that they should inform him if they found any suitable guide so ^{that} he himself could benefit from him.⁴

1. State and Culture in Medieval India, p.163.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.14-32, Hazrat-ul-Quds (Urdu), Vol.I, pp.221-22.

3. Ibid.

4. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.15-16.

Continous penctences and vigils had so impaired his health that at the age of forty he looked as a man of eighty years. He died on Saturday 25th Jamadiul Akhir 1012 A.H./ 30th Nobember 1603 and was burried near Qadamgah-i-Rasul, the north side of the Firuzi Fort in Delhi.¹

Khwaja Baqi Billah was survived by two sons, Khwaja Obaidullah, commonly called Khwaja Kalan, and Khwaja Abdullah, known as Khwaja Khurd.² Both these sons were

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat,, p.32. Also Kulliyat-i-Khwaja Baqi Billah, Lahore, 1968, p.65.

2. Ibid., pp.61-66, Hazrat-ul-Quds (Urdu), pp.26-65.
N.B.: Maulana Nasim Ahmad Faridi is of the opinion that Khwaja Obaidullah was the younger son of Khwaja Baqi Billah and he was known as "Khwaja Khurd" whereas the elder son was Khwaja Abdullah who was commonly called "Khwaja Kalan". The Maulana's statement is based on the treatise Asrariya, produced by Syed Muhammad Kamal Sambhali in 1069 A.H. See, Tazkira Khwaja Baqi Billah, pp.39-66.

Though Maulana Faridi has thoroughly discussed the controversy and provided evidences in his favour but our sources Zubdat-ul-Maqamat and Hazarat-ul-Quds mention them as Obaidullah alias Khwaja Kalan, and Abdullah as Khwaja Khurd. Moreover, the famous work of 'Khwaja Kalan'. Mubligh-ur-Rijal also refers its author as Obaidullah. The Manuscript of this work is possessed by Maulana Azad Library of A.M.U. Aligarh. It is clearly mentioned on the title of the book.

Besides, in the beginning of the book, the author (Khwaja Kalan) gives his name as Obaidullah. It appears that the manuscript was both written and transcribed in 1066 A.H. If there would be any controversy between the real name and alias of the author, he had not approved it.

great scholars¹ and renowned sufis.² They worked for the development of Islamic mysticism and showed great in popularization of the Naqshbandi silsilah. Baqi Billah's chief Khalifa and spiritual successor Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, also known as Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, holds a very special

1. The contemporary and later sources present them as eminent scholars and author of various books. The elder son Khwaja Obaidullah, as mentioned above, produced a Persian treatise Mubligh-ur-Rijal which throws valuable light on the religious condition of Akbar and Jahangir's reigns. Instead of Maulana Azad Library, A.M.U. Aligarh, the Indian Office Library also owns a manuscript of the work. For a detailed introduction see, Muhammad Aslam, Tarikhi Maqalat, Delhi, 1970, p.61-82. Aslam also refers to it in his Din-i-Ilahi aur uska pas Manzar, Delhi 1969, pp.21-22.

Obaidullah, Khwaja Kalan, is also reported to have compiled another work Tazkira-i-Maghaikh. It consists of one lakh poetic verses in praise of different Muslim saints. See Hazarat-ul-Quds (Urdu), p.261.

The younger son of Khwaja Baqi Billah, Abdullah, generally known as 'Khwaja Khurd' was also a renowned scholar. He had been a teacher of Shah Abdur Rahim, a famous Muslim Scholar as well as the sufi-saint of the eighteenth century and the illustrious father of Shah Waliullah of Delhi. For details see Anfas-ul-Arifin (Urdu), p.58.

2. Both these sons of Khwaja Baqi Billah were eminent saints of their time. For their mystcal achievements see Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.61-69 and Hazrat-ul-Quds, Vol.I, (Urdu), pp.260-65. Also see, Anfas-ul-Arifin (Urdu), pp.57-65, Tazkira Khwaja Baqi Billah, pp.39-83.

position in the history of Islam in India.¹ He accelerated his master's mission by reversing the heretical trends of his time and restoring the pristine purity of Isla. In the words of Schimmel¹ "He tried much more energetically to follow the Naqshbandi practices for ameliorating the Muslim society".² A moreover, Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehlavi, also a famous, divine of the age, joined Khwaja Baqi Billah mystic fold and sought his spiritual guidance.³ Shaikh

1. Although he compared quite a few books and treatise, his main fame rests upon his 534 Persian letters, known as Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, run into three volumes. These letters presents an accurate picture of his mystical, as well as political accomplishments, and reveal his scholarly approach. For his biography and other details see Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, Hazrat-ul-Quds, Vol.II, Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, by Khwaja Kamaluddin Muhammad Ehsan. Moreover, a large number of modern works both in Urdu and in English are available.
2. Annemarie Schimmel, Islam in Indian Sub-continent, Brill-Leiden, 1980, p. 91
3. It is said Shaikh Abdul Haq had spiritually been indicated by Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, to join the Naqshbandi discipline of Khwaja Baqi Billah and become his disciple. See Sadiq Hamadani, Kalimat-us-Sadiqin (MS.) f.96a. The Shaikh himself writes in his treatise Risala-i-Wasiyat Nama "When I returned India, I got an opportunity to meet Khwaja Mahamad Baqi Naqshbandi, for a long time I performed Naqshbandi practices and spiritual exercises and received the tracing of zikr, maraqaba, rabta, and Yad Dasht under him. See Hayat-i-Shaikh Abdul Haq of Muhaddis, pp.136-37.

Husamuddin¹, Shaikh Ilahtad² and Shaikh Tajuddin³ were

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1. Previously he was in the royal service of Emperor. Since his very boyhood Khwaja Husamuddin was attracted towards the saints. This fondness of mystics initially made relinquish his job. Later, he reached Delhi and, met Khwaja Baqi Billah and after some time became his disciple. Husamuddin lived rest of his life at Khangah of the Khwaja and when the latter died, the whole responsibility of the Khangah went to Shaikh Husamuddin. He looked after his master's children and take care of the visitors of the Khwaja. He died on 29th Ramazan 1040/22 and March 1631. He was the brother-in-law of Faizi and Abdul Fazl. But they had hostile attitude towards him as he criticised their activities and opposed Akbar's religious policies. For details, see Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.70-77, Hazarat-ul-Quds (Urdu), 270-275.
 2. He too was a devout Khalifa and an old companion of Khwaja Baqi Billah. He had joined the saint at Lahore during his first visit. The Khawaja, at his departure for Central Asia, had left him at Lahore on his deputy. He accompanied Baqi Billah to Delhi and remained there throughout his life. All the responsibilities of the langer khana (free kitchen) of the Khangah of Khwaja Baqi Billah were assigned to him. He died in Ramazan 1049/1639 and was buried near the grave of his spiritual mentor. See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.78-85, Mazarat-ul-Quds, pp. 275-276.
 3. Another Khalifa of Khwaja Baqi Billah. Previously he had affiliation in Chishtiya order with Shaikh Allah Bakhshi of Garh Mukteshwar in Meerut district.
The Khwaja had deputed him to his native town to Sambhal and asked to popularize Naqshbandi teachings there. After the Khwaja's death, Tajuddin first visited Kashmir and then went to Mecca for Hajj pilgrimage. There he came into contact with an erudite scholar and mystic Shaikh Muhammad Ilan who after some time joined his mystic discriptions. During his stay at Mecca Shaikh Tajuddin translated some renowned Persian works into Arabic such as Rashahat-i-Ain-ul-Hayat of Kashifi. When his favourite disciple Shaikh Ilan passed away, Tajuddin left for India but after a brief stay there he permanently migrated to Mecca via Lahore and Basrah. He settled near the Kaba where he breathed his last on 22nd Rabi-ul-Awwal 1052/1642. For details see, Zubadat-ul-Muqamat, pp.86-87, Hazarat-ul-Quds, pp.265-270.

famous Khalifas of the Khwaja who devoted themselves to their spiritual master and played important part in disseminating the Naqshbandi order in India and abroad.

Khwaja Baqi Billah does not seem to have participated in Mughal politics but it clearly appears that he was not satisfied with the religious and political condition of the time. He had settled down in Delhi at a time when the policies of Emperor Akbar had created an environment of distress and sorrow among the Muslims of India. The laws of Islam had been suppressed and Muslims could not openly fulfil their religious conventions.¹ Hence, the Khwaja preached the importance of spiritual values in man's life and revived people's interest in Shariat. Like his spiritual predecessors, especially Khwaja Obaidullah Ahrar, Baqi Billah believed in maintain cordial relations with the ruling class in order to religiously and morally reform the

1. In this connection see Badayuni, Muntakhib-ut-Tawarikh Vol.II. The letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also reflect the religious condition of Akbar's reign. See Muktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letter No.47.

Muslim society and to remove the people's difficulties.¹ His peity and bearing drew towards him many important personalities of the royal court. As all contemporary sources are silent and give no information, it is difficult to presume whether Khwaja Baqi Billah ever came into contact with Emperor Akbar. But according to Zubdat-ul-Magammat he had friendly relations and did correspond with some of the Mughal nobles who would send the coins of gold and silver to him.²

Nawab Syed Murtuza Khan, commonly called Shaikh Farid Bukhari (ob. 1616), an eminent Mughal noble, was highly impressed by Khwaja Baqi Billah. He held the saint in high esteem and provided him with all sorts of help. Shaikh Muhammad ikram is of the opinion that the Khwaja's mission would not have secured great success in India within a short period of four or five years if Shaikh Farid had not

1. Khwaja Obaidullah Abrar was the first Naqshbandi saint who made contacts with and deeply influenced his contemporary rulers. He freely mixed with them and sought their help for the welfare of people. For details see Rashahat-i-Ain-ul-Hayat, pp.287-305. In this connection also see Maktabat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letters No.47, 65.

2. Zubdat-ul-Magammat, p.24.

cooperated with him.¹ He seem to have frequently visited Baqi Billah at Delhi and obtained his spiritual blessings.² It is reported that he had fixed daily allowances for the follower of Baqi Billah and bore all the expenses of his Khanqah.³

The Khwaja also paid respect to Shaikh Farid Bukhari and considered him his fast friend. He would say to his fast friend. He would say to his followers that Shaikh Farid had many rights on them and due to his grace and existance, they had enjoyed great spiritual benefits and pleasures.⁴ The collection of his letters continous several letters addressed to Shaikh Farid. It appears that from his malfuzat always addressed Shaikh Farid in his letters as "Qiblagahi Salamat Bashand" means his magesty be prosper.⁵

1. Rud-i-Kausar, pp.186-87.
2. Towards the end of 1601 (1010) Shaikh Farid Bukhari was assigned the duty to check the levy of unauthorised dues by some corrupt officials on the routes from Agra to Lahore. (See Akbarnama, Vol.III, p.802). It seems that during his visit to Delhi and Lahorehe would meet Khwaja Baqi Billah.
3. Gandhi Shattari, Gulzar-i-Abrar (Urdu), p.77.
4. Maktubat, I, 45. Kulliyat, p.57.
5. Kulliyat, p.57.

The Khwaja never liked Shaikh Farid to be criticised by anyone. If anybody made objection on their friendship, he would reply that he did not find any injunction of Shar (Shriate) to save his terms with Shaikh Farid.¹ The latter continued his favours and kindness even after the death of the saint and did not break his relations with Khwaja's sons and followers. He looked after the family of Khwaja Baqi Billah and often visited his Khangah where he met and discussed their problems with Khwaja Husamuddin.² He had cordial relations with Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi³ and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.⁴ The latter in many of his maktubat has acknowledged Shaikh Farid Bukhari's help and cooperation for his spiritual mentor. In all his letters to Shaikh Farid, Sirhindi seems to be highly thankful to him for his sympathetic behaviour towards Khwaja Baqi Billah.⁵

1. Maktubat, I, 45.
Kulliyat, p.57.

2. Malfuzat-i-Khwaja Khurd (MS.) M.A. L. Aligarh, f.18.

3. For Shaikh Farid's relation with Shaikh Abdul Haq see, Hayat-i-Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlawi, pp.233-36.

Muhammad Umar, Shaikh Farid Bukhari's relations with contemporary Ulama (Unpublished article) IHC Volume 1977, Department of History, A.M.U. Aligarh.

4. Ibid. Also see Rud-i-Kausar, pp.186-189.

5. Maktubat, Vol.I, see letter No.45 and 54.

Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanam, another eminent noble of Emperor Akbar, ~~was~~^{is} also influenced Khwaja Baqi Billah. According to Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, once he was informed that the Khwaja was intending to go on Hajj, he accordingly sent ruppes one lakh for travelling expenses but the saint refused to accept it saying that he did not like to spend the money collected from the people for his own purpose.¹

Moreover, some other outstanding personalities of the Mughal court are also reported to have become followers of the Khwaja. Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka and Sadr-us-Sudur Miran Sadr-i-Jahan had close contacts with him. The letter approached and requested the saint for initiating him into his mystic discipline. It appears that the Khwaja had accepted him as his murid². The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat contains a letter of Khwaja Baqi Billah which reveals that Miran Sadr-i-Jahan consulted the saint in the reveals that Miran Sadr-i-Jahan consulted the saint in the matter of distribution of land grants and charity in cash.³ The Khwaja wrote

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp. 24-25.
2. See Rud-i-Kausar, pp.111-12.
3. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.144-45.

letters to Mirza Aziz Koka and exhorted him for adherence to Shariat. The collection of the Khwaja's letters contains an epistle which seems to have been sent to Sadr-i-Jahan. It recommends (Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi to be given) some annual grant to be given to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.¹

Almost all the teachings and mystic thought of Khwaja Baqi Billah 'revolve around the Kitab-wa-Sunnah, i.e. the Quran and the Hadith. He laid great stress on Shariat, i.e. the Laws of Islam, and considered Tasawwuf a complete devotion and surrender to it.² He used to say that a mystic should follow the Shariat first and then turn to the mystic path and principles.³ To him it is the duty of a sufi to inspire and persuade the people and other sufis for the propagation, protection and furtherance of the Shariat. He stressed the purification of the soul by strictly adhering to the practices of the Holy Prophet. He would say that

1. Kulliyat-i-Khwaja Baqi Billah, P.20 .

2. Kulliyat-i-Khwaja Baqi Billah, Lahore 1968, p.20.

3. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.56.

nobody could become a perfect saint without following the Holy Prophet and his companions, i.e. the path of Ahl-i-Sunnat wa Al-Jamat.¹ The fulfilment of all the spiritual blessings and no action or saying of any saint can be completed with it. He attached great importance to the study of Quran, Hadith and Fiqh, the Islamic jurisprudence and exhorted his followers to translate them into actions. The Khwaja emphasized the importance of obligatory prayers as means for attaining Gnosis (Maarifat).² He himself was careful in performing his religious duties and five time namaz. The author of Kalimat-us-Sadiqin says, "None of his actions was contrary to the teachings of the Shariat.³ He paid great respect to the followers of Shariat⁴ and supported the actions, ideas and sayings of the elders saints as they were true followers of the Holy Prophet and acted upon the principles of Islam. According to him these followers of Islam deserve to be meticulously followed.⁵

1. Kulliyat, p.21.

2. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.49.

3. Sadiq Hamadani, op.cit., f.104a.

4. Kulliyat, p.133.

5. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.36.

The other important advice of Khwaja Baqi Billah to his disciples was to earn their livelihood through legal means and personal efforts. He always exhorted for the lawful morsel.¹ He would say that a mystic should care not only for the legality of food but for other things also, He should check whether the fuel, water and utensils are obtained lawfully.² The Khwaja himself did not take any particle of food obtained from doubtful means.³

Baqi Billah strongly favoured tawakkul, (trust in God), and considered it one of the significant features of Islamic mysticism. According to him it causes too much confidence in God and involves the absorption of individuality in the Essence. To him tawakkul does not mean sitting idle and doing no work. But every one should keep himself busy in some job.⁴ He would say that means were like doors and every one should make use of them. Whosoever closes the doors, commits mistake. Life of lathargy and parasitism is definitely condemned.⁵ The Khwaja laid great emphasis on

1. Kulliyat, p.22.

2. Ibid., p.34.

3. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.22-24.

4. Kulliyat, p.22.

5. Ibid. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.54.

rabita or tasawwur-i-Shaikh¹ and enjoined his disciples to practice it regularly.² Tauba, the penitence, was also an important exhortation of the Khwaja. According to him it is the initial stage of mystic path. It dissociates from sins and develops a love for God. Whenever he initiated disciple, he exhorted him to repent from sins committed in the past and to make a resolve to follow Shariat in future.³ To him the perfect tauba is to cutt off onself from the wordly affairs.⁴ The teachings of Khwaja Baqi Billah also highlight zuhd, ganaat, uzlat and Sabr. Defnying Zuhd he writes in a letter, "A mystic should abandon all desires whether of this world or of the world hereafter. No sufi can achieve his goal unless the renounces this world and devotes himself to Almighty Allah.⁵ He would say that ganaat was the abandonment of superfluous things, satisfaction only with undispensable commodities (most essential for life),

1. An important sufi practice which is enjoyed by visualising the spiritual mentor as a source of spiritual inspiration. Almost all the sufi-saints rely upon it for their inner development.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.17.

3. Ibid.

4. Hazaratul-Quds (Urdu), p.230.

5. Ibid.

and to obtain from the wastage of money and provisions. To him, the perfect ganaat is the satisfaction only with indispensable commodities (most essential for life), and to abstain from the wastage of money and provision. To him, the perfect ganaat is the satisfaction with God and His love.¹ Discussing uzlat, the selfseclusion, he says that a mystic should keep himself aloof from the society and constantly re-examine his spiritual conditions. He should join his disciples and family with the intention of human welfare, only when it is indispensable. A mystic should banish all thoughts except those of God and His religion. He should purify his heart also.² As far sabr, (patience), he means it to give up all pleasures of soul (ruh) and to abstain from desirous things.³ Emphasis on zikr and tawajjuh is also laid in the Khwaja's thought. He defines Zikr as to forget everything, even himself, except God whereas the process of abstaining from all desires and devoting himself to God is tawajjuh.⁴ Moreover, maraqaba (Meditation), is also an

1. Hazaratul-Quds (Urdu), p.230.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

essential feature of Baqi Billah's spiritual exhortations. Through the process of maragaba a mystic's concentration on the infinite and the eternal is developed. The mystic itinerant passes from one station (maqam) to another. It creates in mystic a love for God. According to him maragaba with love (muhabbat), becomes an effective process of inner development.¹ He used to say that one could become a perfect saint only by adopting these features. If one does not follow the rules he can not be a perfect sufi.²

It appears, Khwaja Baqi Billah believed in Wahdat-ul-Wujud (Unity of Being) and supported the views of Shaikh Muhiyyuddin Ibn-i-Arabi. The concept of Wahdat-ul-Wujud within the framework of Shariat was his favourite doctrine. But during the last days of his life he had changed his views. He is said to have uttered that Tauhid-i-Wujudi was a narrow lane whereas the broad way was another.³ It is reported that he had indicated the danger related to this concept. He would say that the faith in Tauhid (Monotheism), is the most important pillar of Islam and it did not mean

1. Ibid., Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.42.

2. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.230.

3. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letter No.43. Also Mubligh-ur-Rijal (MS.), f.34b.

merely the affirmation of one God, but rejection of all other and false Gods. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. None can claim to share authority with Him.¹

The Khwaja and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi:

Thus the Khwaja deeply influence Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi when he reached his Khangali first time with Maulana Hasan Kashmiri. Baqi Billah warmly accorded and requested the Shaikh to stay with him for some time. though hesitated in the beginning but soon Shaikh Ahmad complied with the Khwaja request. The latter is said to have been spiritually informed of Shaikh Ahmad's visit to him. When in Central Asia, once he dreamt that a beautiful bird was sitting on his hand and he was pouring the Saliva of his mouth into lack. In return, the bird gave him the particles of suger. When Baqi Billah described the dream to his spiritual preceptor Maulana Khwajgi Amkangi,² the latter told that such type of bird was found in India. He further said to Baqi Billah that

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.38.

2. A great Naqshbandi saint of Central Asia who was a disciple and spiritual successor of his father Maulana Darwish Muhammad (ob. 970/1562). It is said that a large number of ulama, sufis, and common people frequently visited him and benefited from his spiritual solace. Even Abdullah Khan Uzbek, the ruler of Turan, had great faith in him and presented gifts to him. Maulana Khwajgi died in 1008/1599-1600 and was buried in his native town Amkana in the vicinity of Samarqand. See Hazarat-ul-Quds (Urdu), Vol.I, pp.210-13.

he should go to Hindustan and propagate the Naqshbandi silsilah there Maulana Khwajgi also foretold that in India Baqi Billah would come into contact with a great personality of the time who would join his mystic discipline.¹

Both Khwaja Baqi Billah and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi considered their meeting, with each other, a great event in their spiritual career.² Accordingly, the Shaikh undertook spiritual practices and meditation under the Khwaja's mystic

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.141.

2. The Khwaja's sentiments for Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi can distinctly be studied in one of his epistles. He writes, "I came into contact with a great personality, Shaikh Ahmad by name, who belongs to Sirhindi. He is a great scholar. I judged his inner condition and found him like a lamp. I hope he will illuminate the whole world and become a great religious personality of his time. He has several brothers who are well-versed in religious learnings. His sons are also endowed with spiritual qualities. All of them are pious and seem to be great saints". See Kulliyat-i-Khwaja Baqi Billah, p.130 (Letter No.65). Also, Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.144-45.

Similarly, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also writes in a letter to Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi that, "When I felt spiritual thirst, I fortunately reached the Khangah of Khwaja Baqi Billah who taught me the lesson of Divine Names". See Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.290.

Moreover, in another letter to Maulana Hasan Kashmiri, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi thanks the latter with great humility and says that it was he (Hasan Kashmiri) through whose guidance he reached the threshold of Khwaja Baqi Billah and attained higher and higher spiritual stages. See, Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.279.

guidance. It is reported that hardly a month was over, the spiritual greatness of Baqi Billah deeply influenced Ahmad Sirhindi. The Khwaja took him in seclusion and helped in performing the spiritual exercises. Sources say that within no time Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was enlightened by the saint and then turned a devout mystic. He now became Baqi Billah's devotee and decided to join his mystic discipline.¹ The Khwaja initiated Sirhind into the Naqshbandi silsilah as his

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1. In one of his letters to Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, the author of the Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi has described his spiritual attainment in detail. The epistle sheds interesting light on his spiritual journey during the period he stayed with his spiritual preceptor. It states, "when I felt spiritual thirst, I fortunately reached the Khanqah of Khwaja Baqi Billah, one of the eminent Khalifas of the great Naqshbandi saints, who taught me the lesson of Divine Name (Ism-i-Zat-i-Jalla Sul tanahu). During my spiritual exercises, once I saw a huge river in which the world was floating. The teachings and principles of the Naqshbandi silsilah gradually over came. I informed the Khwaja of my spiritual development. He always exhorted me to meditate and concentrate in performing spiritual exercises. Later I attained the stage of 'Fana-i-Fana'. When I again told my Khwaja, he asked to see the whole world as one. Then there appeared a great light which illumined the whole environment. I thought it the appearance of God but shortly afterwards it disappeared. When I further told the Khwaja my further development, he enjoined me that it was Iluzopri-i-Naqshandi, an intermediary stage in the Naqshbandi philosophy. Later I found the inhabitants of the world including myself as a part of God. I also found myself and even all the particles of the world as light (noor). When I finally informed Khwaja Baqi Billah, he told that it was the stage of Haqq-ul-Yaqin, the last stage where one realizes the truth, i.e. God. See Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letter No.290.

murid and in the month of Rajab, 1008/ January 1600 he conferred his Khilafat upon him.¹ Having benefited from his stay with the saint, Shaikh Ahmad returned to Sirhind and started the preaching and propagation of the Nashbandi ideology. It is reported that Khwaja Raqi Billah had asked some of his disciples to accompany the shaikh to his native place, i.e. Sirhind, in order to receive spiritual guidance from him. the Shaikh trained all these murids of the Khwaja.² The Khwaja was so deeply influenced and highly glad by Shaikh Ahmad's spiritual performance that on his departure from Delhi, he wrote to some of his close associates. "I came into contact wiht a great personality, Shaikh Ahmad by name, who belong to Sirhind. He is a great scholar. I judged his inner condition and found him like a lamp. I hope he will illumine the world and be a great religious figure of the time. He has several brothers who are well versed in religious learning. His sons are also endowed with spiritual qualities. All of them are pious and seem to be a great saints".³ From Sirhind, Shaikh Ahmad .

1. See Mabda-wa-Maad, pp.141-46.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp.141-46.

3. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.144-45.

started correspondence with his spiritual mentor. He despatched many letters to the Khwaja and described his spiritual progress therein. It is learnt that the famous letter in which he threw light on the various stages of his spiritual development and which later on became the main point of the controversy between him and the other ulama, Sufis and even emperor Jahangir, was also written during these days.¹ Despite the problems of Islamic theology and mysticism, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also reported his pir the

1. This letter occupies eleventh number in the first volume of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani. In the beginning Ahmad Sirhindi throws light on the initial stages on his mystical journey. Then he described its second phase and says, "Now I reached some higher stage, the stage of Usman Zunurain, the third pious Caliph". Other Caliph are also authorised to live in this stage. It too is the stage of perfection and direction; maqam-i-takmil-o-irshad. Later on I saw another station, higher to the previous one. I was told that it was place of the second pious Caliph, Umar al-Faruq and there is the station of Abu Bakr Saddiq-i-Akbar, the first pious caliph. I visited that very place also. At very stage I found myself accompanied by Khwaja Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshband. And above all there is the stage of the Holy Prophet. Below this stage and above stage of Abu Bakr Siddiq, there was a bright and liminous stage which I had not ever seen. I came to know that it was the Maqam-i-Mahbubiyat, the stage of Divine Love. Then I found myself like air and clouds. Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband resides in the stage of Siddiq-i-Akbar. "For the controversy between Sirhindi and his opponents see infra 1.

progress of his followers whom he had sent to Sirhind.¹

In Ramzan 1009/February 1601, paid another visit to Khwaja Baqi Billah in Delh and stayed there for three months, upto Zeeqada 1009/April 1601. Now the Khwaja held in high esteem and paid him great honour. It is narrated that once Shaikh Ahmad was sleeping in the room where Khwaja Baqi Billah would sit and take rest, and even performed his prayers and meditations. When he (the Khwaha) intended to enter the room and open the door, he came to know that Shaikh Ahmad was resting there. The Khwaja immediately stopped there, standing outside the door and putting his hands on the waist. When Shaikh Ahmad heard the sound hinting the presence of some one, he asked from inside the room that who was outside the room. The Khwaja replied, "yours servant Muhammad Baqi". The Shaikh immediately got up

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1. Near about all the letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, which were sent to Khwaja Baqi Billah, contain the information of the spiritual progress of his letters. The first letter throws light on Mulla Qasim Ali's mystical progress whereas the third letter describes the spiritual meditation of Mir Syed Shah Husain. Khwaja Bushan and Shaikh Ilah Bakhsh occupy their places in letter Nos. 5 and 10 respectively. Moreover, letters eleventh, fourteenth and eighteenth provide detailed information of the spiritual training of Shah Husain, Shaikh Nur, Mualana Mahmud, Miyan Jafar, Shaikh Nagauri, Shaikh Kamal, Shaikh Isa, Miyan Shaikhi, Miyan Shaikh Muzammil, Khwaja Ziauddin Muhammad, Mulla Qasim Ali, Mulla Abdul Hadi, Mulla Abdur Rehman, Shaikh Nur, Abdul Momim, Mulla Maudu Muhammad and Shaikh Abdullah Niyazi.

and came out of the room.¹ During his whole stay with the spiritual mentor, Shaikh Ahmad continued his exercises and meditation. He served his spiritual master and benefited from his radiance as well as his discourses. The author of Zubdat-ul-Maqamat rightly says that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi paid great respect and wholeheartedly devoted himself to Khwaja Baqi Billah. Referring to Khwaja Husamuddin, also a Khalifa of Khwaja Baqi Billah, Hashim Kishmi says that the latter too was very much affectionate to Shaikh Ahmad and even sometimes exaggerated in paying regards and honour to his favourite disciple.²

It is reported that the Khwaja, later on, ordained his new disciples to go to Sirhindi to obtain spiritual training from Shaikh Ahmad. It appears that some of them once made excuse for not doing so. The Khwaja angrily told them that if they wanted their faith to be secured, they must go to him. The Khwaja further told that Shaikh Ahmad was like the sun, and the person like him (the Khwaja) had no importance before him.³

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.153-54.

2. Ibid., pp.148-49.

3. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya (Urdu) Part I, p.107.

In the same year, most probably the first half of 1010/1601 Shaikh Ahmad was conferred upon with the Khilafat in the Qadiriya silsilah by Shah Sikandar Qadiri, the grandson and spiritual successor of Shaikh Kamal Qadiri. It is reported that once Ahmad Sirhind was sitting in his mosque in meditation, Shaikh Sikandar Qadiri arrived and presented his grand-father's Khirqah, the spiritual-religious garment, to him.¹ Many supernatural events are said to have occurred when Ahmad Sirhind wore this garment. The spirit of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani² with that of Ali bin Abi Talib, the fourth

1. Almost all the sources reveal that Shaikh Kamal had willed to give his khirqah to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind. Later on, he also spiritually instructed Shah Sikandar in a vision to do so. See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.134.

2. He holds supreme position among the saints of Islam. A descendant of the Holy Prophet, through his grand-sons, Hasan and Husain, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani is called Hasanul-Husaini, on account of his descent, on his mother's side from Hasan. The Shaikh was born in 470/1077 or 471/1078 at Gilan or Jilan, town south of the Caspian sea. At the age of eighteen he went to Baghdad and joined the world famous institution, Madarsa-i-Nizamiya. Consequently he started his career as alim and attracted a large crowd towards him. Later on, he turned to the mystic pursuits and spent a long time in spiritual exercises and meditation at different places and under different spiritual masters. People attended his discourses in large numbers and benefited from him.

He is the founder of the Qadiriya silsilah. It is alleged among the Sufis of Islam that the foot of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani rests on the necks of all Muslim saints. The Shaikh died on 11th Rabi-us-Sani 561/14th February 1166 in Baghdad where his tomb is still a great centre of Sufism and thousands of people visit it every year. For his details see, Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, pp.13-26.

Pious Caliph, and also the spirit of Khwaha Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshband¹ with that of Abu Bakr Siddiq, the first Pious Caliph, alongwith the spiritis of all the departed saint of their respective silsilahs, appeared to him. Each of them claimed Ahmad Sirhindi to be the representative of his own mystic order. While the conteption was continued, the spirits of the founders o the Chishti and the Suharwardi silsilahs, accompanied by the souls of the departed saints of their sufi orders, also appeared to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. They also argued that the Shaikh should represent their silsilahs. The dispute continued from morning till noon. At last the Holy Prophet of Islam appeared there and all of them made appeal to him to decide the matter. The Prophet of Islam told them, " Let there be United in Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi the spiritual power of all the religious

1. Born in 718/1318 at Qasr-i-Arifin near Bukhara in Central Asia, he was founder of the Naqshbandi silsilah. Since his early boyhood he was keenly devoted to the spiritual practices and meditation. Later he became a disciple of Amir Kulal (ob. 772/1564). He also benefited from the spirit of Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Ghajdwani. Bahauddin followed the Shariat and the Hanafite school. He left a deep impact upon the people of Transoxiana and Central Asia. A large multitude of people, ulama, sufis, scholars and the ruling class joined his mystic discipline. He died on Monday, the 3rd Rabi-ul-Awwal 791/2nd March 1389 and was buried in Bukhara. For his details see, Abdur Rahman Jami, Najahat-ul-Uns, Calcutta 1968, pp.439-53; Also, Hazarat-ul-Quds, Vol.I, (Urdu) Lahore 1922, pp.123-159; Also Safinat-ul-Auliya, p.78.

orders of upereme authority in your silsilahs. But the Naqshbandi silsilah should take the precedence and be preferred with him as it is related and traced to my friend Abu Bakr, and because it is in keeping with the laws of Islam, i.e. Shariat. He (Shaikh Ahmad) is to be great former of my religion."¹ Though in the beginning Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi initiated disciples in all the mystic orders but subsequently he confined the practice to the Naqshbandi and the Qadiri Silsilahs. It is said that during the last fifteen years of his life he taught his disciples only in the Naqshbandi way.

Meanwhile, Miran Sadr-i-Jahan and Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka got themselves initiated into the mystic discipline of Ahmad Sirhindi. they seem to have been recommended to the shaikh by Khwaja Baqi Billah.² The latter also sent Mir Swaleh Nishapuri to Shaikh Ahmad in order to receive spiritual training from him.³

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.135.

2. See Kulliyat-i-Baqi Billah, Lahore, p.87 (the letter of the saint, No.17).
Also Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya (Urdu), p.111.

2. Kulliyat, p.140, Letter No.83.
Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.154.
Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumia, p.111.

Sirhindi visited his spiritual preceptor third time in the beginning of 1012/1603 when the Khwaja was seriously ill. Though he was around forty but due to his continuous prayers and penitences he looked like a man of eighty years old as spiritual exercises and vigils had greatly impaired his health. Khwaja Baqi Billah, however, accorded a warm welcome to his favourite Khalifa. It is reported that he moved for few miles and went to the Kabuli Darwaza, the entrance of the town, in order to receive Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. It is also reported that the Khwaja, on this occasion, entertained Shaikh Ahmad with great honour and sought his blessings and favours for himself, his infant sons and both the wives.¹ He enjoined his every disciple to strictly follow and associate himself with the Shaikh. He went to the extent of saying that there had been very few persons in the Muslim Community (Ummat-i-Muslima) like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi after the companions of the Holy Prophet (Ashab-i-Rasul).² The Khwaja now appointed Sirhindi as his chief follower (Khalifa) and spiritual successor. When some of his senior disciples made an objection on this rapid spiritual progress of, and the -----

1. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letter No.264.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.155.

Khwaja's special attention, and the most hospitable attitude towards Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind, who was supposed a new comer by them, he (the Khwaja) told Mir Muhammad Nu'man, the most respected by him among them and also a senior disciple, that the Shaikh was like the sun and thousands of the stars like him (the Khwaja) were moving around and benefiting from him. He further told that among all the Muslim saints there had not been as great saint as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and neither there would emerge any one like him in the future.¹ The Khwaja is also reported to have uttered that it was Shaikh Ahmad, through whose spiritual excellences, he (the Khwaja) entered the spiritual stages (mugamat), he had not even seen earlier. Khwaja Baqi Billah also told that due to Shaikh Ahmad's special spiritual attention towards him led him (the Khwaja) to the broad way of Shariat from the narrow lane of the Tauhid-i-Wujudi.²

Later on, Ahmad Sirhindi, with the permission of his spiritual directors, left for Sirhind where he spent few days with his family members and then he proceeded to -----

1. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, I, p.112.

2. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.43.
Also Khwaja Kalan, Mubligh-ur-Rijal, (MS), A.M.U., f.34b.

Lahore. There he met a number of Ulama, sufi and scholars etc. A large gathering of the local Muslim inhabitants is reported to have been benefited from and enlisted in the mystic discipline of Shaikh Ahmad. He blessed all of them whether rich or poor, illiterate or scholar, and sufi or alim. In Lahore, Shaikh Ahmad came into contact with eminent religious scholar Maulana Jamal Talwi who held him in high esteem and entertained with great sincerity. The Shaikh too paid due respect to the Maulana. It is said that once he asked the Shaikh's opinion about the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wujud which he thought to be against to Shariat. The told something in the Maulana's ears and the latter, having tears in his eyes, departed from there. The author of Zubdat-ul-Muqamat beautifully writes that nobody knows what the Shaikh told Maulana Talwi.¹ Maulana Tahir who was known as a famous alim of the town also joined the spiritual circle of the Shaikh. Moreover Khwaja Farrukh Husain of Ma'wara-un-Nahr (Transoxium) and Mir Syed Nasir Ahmad Ahmad of Rum are also reported to have become the disciple (murid) of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. The former was staying at Lahore in these

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p.157.

N.B. Nothing is known about Maulana Jamal Talwi in any Naqshbandi or other source.

days. When he heard the name and fame of the Shaikh, he came to him and accepted him as his spiritual preceptor. Mir Nasir came to Lahore from Madina. It is said that he had spiritual been told to go to Sirhind by the Holy Prophet when he was, on one occasion, near the (Prophet's) tomb.¹

The Shaikh was still in Lahore that his spiritual preceptor Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah died in Delhi on 25th Jamadi-us-Thani, 1012/20th November 1603.² The sad demise of the saint greatly shocked and caused deep grief to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and he immediately left for Delhi to attend the funeral ceremony.³ As he reached there some late, he visited his master's grave and mourned his death with his sons, wife and khalifas and disciples. All of them sought his spiritual blessings and requested him to lead and direct their matters in accordance with the Khwaja's precepts. The Shaikh is also reported to have remove some different among

1. See Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya (Urdu), p.118.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.32.

3. In his way to Delhi, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi made a short sojourn at Sirhind where Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan and Nawab Murtuza Khan called on him. They obtained spiritual blessings from him as, it is said, the Khwaja had advised them to do so. See Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya (Urdu), p.119.

themselves. All the followers of Khwaja Baqi Billah accepted him as their supreme head and the Khwaja's chief successor. It appears that some of them also objected Ahmad Sirhindi's succession and refused to accept him as the head of the Naqshbandi order in India. But their disputes and opposition could not exist for long time and very soon they submitted, realized Ahmad Sirhindi's significance and accepted him as their religious leader.¹ In the mean time, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi wrote a commentary on the Khwaja's work Sharh-i-Rubaiyat.² Subsequently he returned to Sirhind and busily engaged himself in academic activities and spiritual exercises. It was his usual practice that he visited Delhi every year in the month of Jama II to take part in the Urs of Khwaja Baqi Billah. Sometimes he went to Agra as well and one occasion he visited Allahabad.³ Simultaneously, he made contacts with the eminent nobles of the Mughal empire and started correspondence with the important political and religious figures of the time

1. Zuhdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.158-60.

2. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letters 246, 291.

3. Zuhdat-ul-Muqamat, pp.159-60.

especially Shaikh Farid Bukhari, the great Mughal nobles of the time.¹

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1. In the beginning he sent letters to Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah, his spiritual mentor, and informed him of his spiritual achievements. Near about twenty letters were sent to the saint till his last moment. Afterwards, he dispatched letters to other important personalities viz. Shaikh Muhammad Makki (Letter No.21, in Vol.I, of the Maktubat), Shaikh Abdul Majeed (22), Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan (23), Muhammad Qulich Khan (24), Khwaja Jahan (25), Haji Muhammad Lahori (26,33,34,35,36), Khwaja Amak (27,28), Shaikh Nizam Thanasari (29,30), Shaikh Sufi (31), Khwaja Husamuddin (32), Shaikh Muhammad Khairi (37,38,39,40), Shaikh Darwesh (41,42) and Shaikh Farid Bukhari (43,44,45,46).

CHAPTER-IV
AS ORGANIZER OF THE NAQSHBANDI SILSILAH IN INDIA

CHAPTER IV

AS ORGANIZER OF THE NAQSHBANDI SILSILAH IN INDIA

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi organised the Naqshbandi silsilah in India in a very systematic manner. He deputed his followers (khalifas) in the important cities and towns in the sub-continent. These representatives of the Shaikh worked zealously for the development of the Naqshbandi order and attracted a large multitude to their master's mission. If on one hand they fulfilled the spiritual expectations and religious urges of the masses, on the other, they also came to wield a considerable, and generally sobering influence on the ruling elite which helped them in the organisation of their mystic order. The nature of their deeds impressed the people around him considerably. As they enjoyed respect and reverence from all sections of the Muslim society, thousands of people joined the Naqshbandi silsilah and came into contact with Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Though the latter also sent his khalifas abroad, an analysis of his religious and mystic activities in Indian sub-continent is presented here.

BURHANPUR: Among the khalifas of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Mir Muhammad Nu'man deserves special mention (being the senior most) Sirhindi appointed him as his representative at

Burhanpur,¹ which was a famous town of the Deccan and had been an important centre of sufis and sufism since its very foundation. A number of sufis of different silsilahs had been flourished there and attracted thousands of people to their mystic folds.² Born in 977 A.H./1569 A.D. in

1. A town in the present Madhya Pradesh state and situated in 21° 18' N and 76° 14'E on the Indian Railway. It may be stated here that Burhanpur was built by Nasir Khan Faruqi, the ruler of Khandesh, in 1400 A.D. in the memory of Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib, a Khalifa of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi. It is related that Nasir Khan Faruqi and his father Malik Raja Faruqi were the disciples, of Shaikh Zainuddin, the spiritual successor of Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib. See, Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Farishta, Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi (Tarikh-i-Farishta), Lucknow 1322 A.H., p. 279/ Munshi Thakur Lal, Dasturul Amal-i-Shahanshahi, (MS. in British Museum/ Rotograph in the Research Library, Department of History, A.M.U., Aligarh) ff. 43-44/ Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgiram, Rauzat-ul-Auliya, Hyderabad 1310, p.33

2. It is said that Shaikh Burhanuddin's spiritual descendants played important part in making Burhanpur a prominent Chishti centre. They worked zealously to extend their influence in the town and attracted thousands of people to their mystic fold. Even the rulers of Khandesh felt deeply attracted towards them. A large number of Chishti Khanqahs existed there.

Shaikh Azizullah Mutawakkil (ob. 912/150-7), is reported to be the first eminent saint of the Chishti order in Burhanpur. He was the spiritual descendant of Shaikh Fariuddin Ganj-i-Shakar. Shaikh Azizullah left a deep impact upon the inhabitants of the town and enlisted a large number of people into his mystic Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith, Akhbar-ul-Akhyar, Delhi 132, pp. 278-79/ Ghauthi Shatari, Gulzar-i-Abrar/ Mirza Muhammad Hasa, Mirat-i-Ahmadi/ K.A. Nizami, Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-i-Chisht, Vol. I, Delhi 1979, pp. 222, 266,/ Also "Sufi-Movement in the Deccan", published in the History of Medieval Deccan, (ed. by) H.K. Shairwani, Hyderabad 1974, pp. 176-99.

For the details of the sufis of different silsilah see, Professor Nizami's article Sufi-Movement in the Deccan in Sherwani op.cit.

Samargand,¹ Mir Muhammad Nu'man had been keenly interest in Tasawwuf since his very boyhood. He joined the company of saintly people and spent his time in meditation and offering prayers. In 1008 A.H./1600 A.D. he came to Delhi and joined the mystic discipline of Khwaja Baqi Billah. The mentor's love and affection so deeply influenced Muhammad Nu'man that he decided to permanently stay with him and determined to lead a life of renunciation. On Baqi Billah's death in 1012 A.H./1603 A.D., Muhammad Nu'man came under the direct spiritual guidance of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhini who took to him

1. Muhammad Nu'man originally belonged to Kishm, a famous town in Afghanistan. His father Mir Shamsuddin Yahya, popularly known as Mir Buzurg (ob.944 A.H./1586 A.D.) and came from a distinguished Saiyid family of saintly scholars, was a famous alim and sufi of his time. Mirza Muhammad Hakim, the ruler of Kabul, is reported to have held Mir Yahya in high esteem. He entertained him at his royal court also. It is said that when Mirza Hakim died in 993/1585 and Emperor Akbar appointed Raja Man Singh as his new governor of Kabul, Mir Buzurg could not tolerate a non-Muslim ruler in his country and prayed for his own death. Accordingly he died in 994/ 1586 and was buried in Kabul. See Badruddin Sirhindi, Hazarat-ul-Quds, Vol. II, Lahore, 1971, p. 299

But the author of Zubdat-ul-Magamat, Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi reports that Mir Buzurg was buried in Kishmi which seems correct as he himself belonged to the same town. See, Zubdat-ul-Magamat, p. 327.

to Sirhind and looked after his family for about six years.¹

In 1018 A.H./ 1609 A.D., after conferring his Khilafat upon him, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi deputed Mir Muhammad Nu'man to Burhanpur in order to propagate the Naqshbandi ideology. The Mir faced many of difficulties in the beginning of his religious mission. It appears that the presence of Shaikh Isa Jundullah² and Shaikh Muhammad bin Fazlullah,³ who had enjoyed great fame and popularity in Burhanpur and the surrounding areas for several years, caused great difficulties and proved hindrance in the way of Muhammad Nu'man. They seem to have jointly opposed his arrival and

1. Hashim Kishmi, op.cit., pp.328-31 / Badruddin Sirhindi, op.cit., pp. 300-2.
2. He was disciple and Khalifa of Shaikh Arif, a follower of Saiyyid Muhammad Ghauth of Gwalior. It is related that he had a thorough command over the works of Muhiyyuddin Ibn-i-Arabi and wrote a number of treatises explaining the theory of 'Wahdat-ul-Wujud. He is also reported to have written a commentary on the Quran. He died in 1031 / 1621-22. For details, Gulzar-i-Abrar, f. 206b/ Moza, o. Sufi Movement in the Deccan.
3. A famous saint and scholar of Burhanpur who held important position among the people. Born in 952/ 1545-46 in Gujrat, he studied under eminent Ulama and scholars of his time, both in India and in Mecca and Madian. It is said that Miran Muhammad II, the ruler of Khandesh, paid great respect to him and he had invited him to stay in Burhanpur. Shaikh Muhammad was a strict adherent to Shariat. He produced number of treatises and brochures which cover a wide range of Islamic theology and Sufism. The Shaikh died on 2nd Ramazan 1029/ 1st August 1620. For a detailed study see Saiyyid Imamuddin, Barakat-ul-Auliya, (Urdu), Delhi 1322, pp. 95-97.

activities in the town by considering him their spiritual rival. Though the evidence in this connection is lacking, it is probable that they were opposed to the Naqshbandi silsilah as it was represented by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi whose spiritual ideology might not have been accepted to them. After all, Muhammad Nu'man was so much disgusted with local environment that he had to leave for Sirhind on two occasions. Every time he apprised Shaikh Ahmad of the situation in Burhanpur and even requested him for not sending him back to there. Nevertheless, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, emphasizing the importance of Burhanpur, strongly asked Muhammad Nu'man to return and revive his missionary activities. He also exhorted the Mir to work with patience and courage in a calm and quiet manner. Moreover, Shaikh Ahmad extended blessing to him and wished a great success in near future.¹

Accordingly, Mir Muhammad Nu'man reached Burhanpur once again, established his Khanqah and devoted himself to the spread of the Naqshbandi silsilah in that region. He frequently communicated his problems to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and sought his advice in every important matter. The Shaikh too, paid great attention to Muhammad Nu'man's

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p. 331

work. They both continued correspondence with each other. There are several letters to this effect in the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani. In fact, these letters provided moral support as well as spiritual inspiration to Mir Muhammad Nu'man and even created confidence in him. Once he informed Shaikh Ahmad that some of his opponents were causing him trouble. Sirhindi did not react upon this. However, he exhorted him to continue his work and not to retaliate against them.¹ Hence, Mir Muhammad Nu'man, despite the lack of local support, carried on his missionary activities and gradually began to succeed in his aim. People started to come to him and ultimately his fame spread far and wide. The author of Mirat-i-Jahan Numa informs that a large multitude of people benefited from his spiritual radiance. It is reported that no sooner they saw Muhammad Nu'man, than they slit their garments in a state of spiritual ecstasy.² His compassion radiating personality became the symbol of attraction for the other saints. Many of them are also said to have joined his mystic fold. According to Zubdat-ul-Maqamat and Hazarat-ul-Qud Nu'man started the process of

1. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, letter No. 119.

2. Muhammad Baqa, Mirat-i-Jahan Numa (MS. in British Museum/ Rotograph in the Research Library, Department of History, A.M.U.), f. 112 a

social association and assimilation.¹ Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is reported to have been glad to learn the popularity of his senior follower in Burhanpur. He expected his Khalifa to cover and illumine the whole region of Deccan.²

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi attached great importance to Burhanpur and wanted it to be made an important centre of the Naqshbandi silsilah. When, on one occasion, Mir Muhammad Nu'man wrote to him that some of his new murids wanted to seek training in the Qadiriya silsilah, the Shaikh strongly disapproved it and insisted on giving them the teachings of the Naqshbandi order only.³ Moreover, when he (Shaikh Ahmad) invited Muhammad Nu'man to visit Sirhind, he advised him to come alone and not to leave his seat vacant in Burhanpur so that the missionary work could not be disturbed due to his absence in the town.⁴ The Shaikh was so confident of Mir that he could not tolerate him to be disgraced and insulted. Once he was wrongly reported by some persons from Bushanpur that Mir was not paying any attention to his disciple, and

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.332.
Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.303.

2. Maktubat, Vol. I, letter No. 246

3. Maktubat, Vol. I, letters No.119, 238.

4. Ibid, letters No. 257

busily engaged in the construction of his house and spending Futuh (unasked for Charity) for his own purpose. But the Shaikh Vehemently criticised those who leveled the charges and made complain against Mir. He also warned them for not obeying and paying attention to their spiritual master. He praised Muhammad Nu'man for his bright character and unbound success in Burhanpur and highlighted his spiritual excellences.

Sirhindi's letters to Mir Muhammad Nu'man provide interesting information of Islamic theology and mysticism. In one of his maktubat he says, "The way which leads to the excellences (Kamalat) of the Prophecy (Nabuwwat), is associates with the Nawshbandi silsilah. That is why the deeds of the Naqshbandi saints are in line with the Companions of the Holy Prophet."¹ Sirhindi attached no importance to miracles (Karamat). once he wrote to Mir Muhammad Nu'man that he should not much concentrate on performing the miracles as it was not the condition for spiritual development and all the great sufis, except few, laid no stress on this aspect.² He always enjoined the Mir to strictly follow and preach the Shariat, even among the

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1. Maktubat, Vol.I, letter No. 313

2. Maktubat-ul-Maqamat, p.277.

ruling class. Once the Shaikh wrote to him, "The duty of a Muslim Emperor is to enforce Shariat in his dominion. The carelessness of a single moment in this great task causes harm to both Islam and the Muslims."¹

Mir Muhammad Nu'man was also on friendly terms with Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan. According to Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, Khan-i-Khanan visited him in Burhanpur during his viceroyalty of the Deccan. It is related when Jahangir dismissed him from the governorship of Deccan and became hostile towards him, the Khan-i-Khanan sought Muhammad Nu'man's spiritual blessings.² It appears from the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani that he helped the Mir and took interest in his religious activities. In a letter to Abdur Rahim, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi writes, "The presence of Mir Muhammad Nu'man in that region is most important. I regard his blessings and spiritual attention towards you as invaluable. They are the source of your stability and promotion. More than a year ago he wrote me of your virtues and your attention to the Nawshbindi saints. He also involved my help to block your transfer from the Deccan. I directed my spiritual attention

1. Ibid

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p. 277.

towards you and found that you were destined to make progress."¹

The fame and popularity of Mir Muhammad Nu'man could not be tolerated by his opponents. They poisoned the ears of the Mughal emperor against him. They told Jahangir that the Mir's activities in Burhanpur could lead to political disturbances in the Mughal Empire as more than one lakh Uzbeks had been enlisted in his mystic discipline.² According to Hazarat-ul-Quds, the Emperor called him to the Royal Court and asked to give explanations of the charges against him. The Emperor is said to have appointed Mahabat Khan to look into the matter and make an inquiry. But on the his satisfactory remarks, Jahangir set him free on the conditions that he would not return to Burhanpur. In -----

1. Maktubat, Volume II, letter No. 62
2. In this connection the statement of Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi is misleading. He says, "Although Akbar and Jahangir would never have been so rash as to despatch such a large military force composed of a single racial group to one out post, it is probable that some newly arrived Uzbeks soldiers did become disciples of Mir Muhammad Nu'man". (See, A History of Sufism in India, Volume II, Delhi, 1983, p.224). It may be noted here that Mir Muhammad Nu'man or his supporters never claimed such a large number of military or civilian Uzbeks to have been initiated into his mystic discipline. The Hazarat-ul-Quds clearly reveals that the rivals of the Mir fabricated this false accusation and incited the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, (See, p. 272).

compliance with the Emperor's order Mir Muhammad Nu'man had to permanently reside at Agra where he died on 18th Safar 1058 A.H./ 5th March 1648 A.D.¹

On passing away of Mir Muhammad Nu'man, his disciple and son-in-law Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi maintained his traditions during the subsequent period and made determined efforts for the development of the Naqshbandi silsilah in Burhanpur.

Though his ancestors owed spiritual allegiance to the Kubrawi silsilah and in his boyhood he himself had come into contact with Kubrawi saints but later he felt attracted towards and decided to join the Naqshbandi silsilah.²

It was in his youth that hashim left for India and spent a period of one year in journeying through various places. Finally he came to Burhanpur in 1029 A.H./1619 A.D. and met Mir Muhammad Nu'man who accorded a warm welcome to him.³ Later on, Hashim Kishmi joined Muhammad Nu'mans mystic discipline and subsequently married his daughter as well.⁴

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds , p. 273

2. Zubdat-ul-Magamat, p.1

3. Ibid, p. 326

4. Zawwar Hussain, Hazrat-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani Karachi 1975, p. 789.

Meanwhile Muhammad Nu'man was introduced Hashim through correspondence, to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and then asked him to visit Sirhind with the intention of meeting and benefiting from the saint himself. It is reported that Mir's introductory remarks so deeply attracted Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi towards Khwaja Hashim Kishmi that he himself had invited the latter to Sirhind.¹

Therefore, Kishmi reached Sirhind and stayed there for about two years in the company of Shaikh Ahmad who trained him very strictly and attentively on the mystic path. Kishmi also worked as Sirhindi's personal assistant. During this period Hashim Kishmi frequently serviced and benefited from Shaikh Ahmad's spiritual assemblies. He also accompanied the Shaikh to different places during his journeys the royal army.² When Sirhindi was in Ajmer, Hashmi Kishmi was present there.³

Later on, Shaikh Ahmad initiated Khwaja Hashim into his own mystic fold and conferred the Khilafat upon him. It is reported that Sirhindi, seven months before his death, sent

1. Maktubat, Vol. II, letter no.1
2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p. 3
Hazarat-ul-Quds, p. 369
3. Zubtal-ul-Maqamat, p. 282
Maktubat, Volume III, letter No. 106

Muhammad Hashim back to Burhanpur for looking after his family and propagating the Naqshbandi silsilah there.¹ As a Naqshbandi sufi, he too acquired great fame and popularity in that town. His achievements earned him respect and administration. People joined him in large numbers and, according to Hazarat-ul-Quds, many high officials and nobles attended his spiritual assemblies.² He also corresponded with Shaikh Ahmad and received instructions from him for his missionary activities.³ The Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani contains many letters to Khwaja Hashim which throw light on the relationship between him and the Shaikh.⁴ Hashim visited Sirhind second time on his pir's demise in 1034 A.H./ 1624 A.D. and remained there for some time in the company of Shaikh Ahmad's sons and other Khalifas.⁵ Afterwards he returned to Burhanpur where he

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1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p. 370
Maktubat, Vol. III, letter No. 106
 2. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p. 370
 3. Maktubat, Vol. III, letter No. 42
 4. See Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani,
Vol. I, letters No. 310, 313
Vol. II, letters No. 65, 74, 93, 97
Vol. III, letters No. 42, 53, 69, 75, 90, 92, 96
 5. Zubdat-ul-Quds, p. 285

lived rest of his life. Kishmi died in 1054 A.H./1644 A.D. and was buried on the bank of river Tapti.¹

Very little is known of Khwaja Hashim's mystic and religious organisation in the Burhanpur. However, his main contribution to the development of the Naqshbandi silsilah in Burnhanpur lies in producing his famous works Zubdat-ul-Maqamat² and Nusmat-ul-Quds.³ The former occupies a significant place in the sufi literature produced in medieval India. It is considered a magnum opus of the Naqshbandi Mujaddidi saints. These works reflect Hashim

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p. 383
Zawwar Husain, op.cit. p. 793
Abdul Haiy, Nuzhat-ul-Khawatir, Vol.5, Hyderabad 1976, p. 406.

It may be mentioned here that Muhammad Aslam gives Khwaja Hashim's year of demise as 1045/1635 which is wrong. His study is based on the tablet (kataba) fixed on Kishmi's grave in Burhanpur. (See, Tarikhi Maqalat, Delhi, 1970, p. 163).

In this connection Zawwar Husain criticises Aslam's view (see Hazrat-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, p. 793).

Moreover, sprenger has written that Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi was alive in 1056/1646, (See, the printed Catalogue of the Royal Asiatic Society, p. 420). But spranger's view also seems incorrect.

2. Published from, Matba-i-Mahmmad, Lucknow, 1885 and Nawal Kishore, Kanpur, 1890.
3. The manuscript of this work belongs to the Laningrad University Library (U.S.S.R.) (See C.A. storey, Persian Literature, London 1972, p. 990).

Kishmi's scholarship and his knowledge of the religious literature. He also compiled the third volume of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani.¹

Though some other Khalifas of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi are also reported to have visited Burhnapur but no Naqshbandi

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p. 370.

In this connection also see the preface of the third volume of the Maktubat. It may be also be mentioned here that Khwaja Hashim was a poet also. Almost all the contemporary and later Naqshbandi sources refer to his poetic compositions. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.377/ Nuzhat-ul-Khawatic Vol. 5, p. 406 / Thomas William Beall, An oriented Biographical Dictionary, Delhi 1971, p. 158. Moreover Hashim himself has given two of his poems at the end of Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, See p. 399.

N.B.: The collection of his poetic verses known as Diwan-i-Hashim seems to have been completed in his life time, (see, William Beale, op. cit. / C.A. storey, p. 988 / Nuzhat-ul-Khuwatis, Vol. 5, p. 406). It is the complete typical work of Khwaja Hashim. The manuscripts of the Diwan belongs to ;

(1) India office library, (see, Eathe, Catalogue of the Persian MSS in India office library, p. 1570, No. 2698

(2) Asiatic Society of Bengal, (See Catalogue, of the Persian MSS in A.S.B. Calcutta, 1924, p. 338, No. 747)

(3) Government oriental manuscript library, Madras, (see, Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts in but orient library, Madras, Madras, 1961, pp. 30-31, S.No. 221, Book No. D-64).

(4) The kutub khana-i-Asafiya also owns a manuscripts of Diwan-i-Hashim, (See, list of Arabic, Persian and Urdu books, Kutub Khana-i-Asafiya, Vol. I, P. 736, Book No. 437).

(5) Maulana Azad Library, A.M.U., Aligarh. (See, Muham-mad Aslam, Tarikhi Maqalat, p. 168),

chronicle has recorded their role and contribution to the expansion of the Naqshbandi silsilah there. It appears they could not stay there permanently.¹ The other outstanding sufi who played an important part in dissemination of the Naqshbandi silsilah in Burhanpur was Shaikh Abul Muzaffar Sufi Burhanpuri who was a Khalifa of Khwaja Muhammad Ma'sum, the son and successor of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. He belonged to a noble family of the Deccan but later he turned to sufi life and zealously worked for the development of the silsilah and its practices as well as thought. His piety and scholarship had a tremendous impact upon the inhabitants of the town. Thousands of people are said to have joined his mystic discipline. He died in 1108/1696 in Burhanpur.²

Agra

The next important place which attracted Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's attention was Agra, the capital of the Mughal empire. Many important personalities of different circles of life resided there. The Shaikh himself had been over there for several years in his youth. His years long stay at and

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, pp. 333, 349
2. For his details see, Barkat-ul-Auliya, p. 138.
Nuzhat-ul-Khawatir, Vol. 6, Hyderabad 1978, p.18.
 Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Khan, Tarikh-i-Auliya-i-Deccan, Vol. I, p. 149.

association with ulama, nobles and sufis in the capital had made him fully acquainted the social, political and religious condition of the city. Though, after the accession of Jahangir the atmosphere, to some extent, had changed yet Shaikh Ahmad attached due importance to the capital of the empire. In comparison with the civilian people, Sirhindi selected the Mughal army for his religious and mystic propagation. It was Shaikh Badi'uddin of Saharanpur whom Sirhindi deputed to this task. Came from a respectable family of Saharnpur, now in western Uttar Pradesh, shaikh Badiuddin had been a student of Shaikh 'Ahmad Sirhindi.¹ Later he had joined the mystic fold of the Shaith and devoted himself to meditation and prayers. After some time Shaikh Ahmad conferred his Khilafat on him and asked him to go to Saharnpur in order to propagat the Naqshbandi silsilah and initiate his own disciples. But soon Shaikh Ahmad transferred Badiuddin to Agra as his Khulifa to spread his teachings in the Mughal army.² Sirhindi strictly asked Shaikh Badiuddin to be determined and not to leave the Mughal capital without his permission. The author of Zubdat-ulagamat says that Badiuddin attracted a large number of people and earned great fame. he got tremendous success in

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p. 346

2. Ibid, p. 347

inculcating a deep sense of piety among both the influential, and fellow mystics alike.¹ But, contrary to the will of Shaikh Ahmad, Badiuddin left Agra for Saharanpur due to some personal matter. Though he later on went to Sirhind to apprise Shaikh Ahmad of his departure from Agra but the Shaikh expressed annoyance at his disciple's violation of his orders.² On Sirhindi's displeasure Badiuddin promised to return to Agra and perform his duties. But this time Shaikh Ahmad asked him to go to Agra on his own risk. However, Badiuddin reached Agra.³ Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kashmi says that in Agra many soldiers of the Mughal army came to him and Badiuddin exhorted them to strictly follow the Shariat and told them of his own spiritual excellence as well as meditation.⁴ It appears that Badiuddin discussed many controversial topics of Tasawwuf with these. He got success in the beginning of his mission and many persons approached him for spiritual exercises and the teachings of the Naqshbandi Silsilah.⁵ But at the same time it also appears

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p. 348

2. Ibid, p. 348

3. Ibid

4. Ibid

5. Z.M., p. 350

that some mischievous persons became his enemy on account of his growing popularity. In one of his letters to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Badiuddin says that they often came and give trouble to him and even abuse Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi and Khwaja Baqi Billah.¹ Despite these circumstances Shaikh Badiuddin continued his work and attracted people towards him. He discussed controversial problems of Sufism with the persons who had no faith in mystic revelation and inspiration. It provided an opportunity to make propaganda against him and his spiritual mentor, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Consequently Jahangir summoned Shaikh Ahmad to Agra and, after inquiring about his mystical thought, got him imprisoned in the Gwalior fort.² Shaikh Badiuddin afterwards shifted to his home-town Saharanpur and lived there rest of his life.³

Jaunpur

Jaunpur was an important city of medieval India. In the Sultanate period it had been a centre of great political and cultural importance under the Sharqi rulers. Even After its annexation with the Mughal empire it maintained its dignity

1. Zubdat-ul-Magamat, p.350.

2. Zubdat-ul-Magamat, p.348.

3. Ibid p. 349

as a great seat of learning. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi realized the importance of this city and decided to introduce his mystic and religious mission in it. He sent Shaikh Tahir Badakhshi as his Khalifa in this city.

According to Zubdat-ul-Maqamat Shaikh Tahir, a native of Badakhshan in Afghanistan had been a soldier in his youth. But later he gave up the military service and led a sufi life on the instruction of the Holy Prophet whom he saw along with Abu Bakr Siddiq and other companions in a vision.¹ For some time he wandered about various places and called on many saints to benefit from them. It is reported that he distributed all his clothes among the poor and needy persons, and wore garment of dervish.²

Having visited many cities and villages Shaikh Tahir Badakhshi ultimately reached Delhi and came into contact with Khwaja Baqi Billal, who imparted spiritual education to him. When the Khwaja passed away Tahir Badakhshi joined the circle of Shaikh Ahmad and performed spiritual exercises under him at Sirhind. The contemporary tazkiras say that Shaikh Ahmad highly regarded the mystical achievement of

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p. 364

2. Ibid

Muhammad Tahir and even sometimes informed his other disciple of his rapid success.¹

In 1017 A.H./1608 A.D. Sirhindi conferred the Khilafat on and sent him to Jaunpur in order to get the Naqshbandi silsilah introduced and popularized there.² It appears that in the beginning Shaikh Tahir also had to face some difficulty. People avoided his company by getting impression that he was a malamati sufi. Once he himself wrote to his spiritual mentor about the circumstances in Jaunpur but Sirhindi, however, asked him to be determined and devoted in his mystical task. Afterwards, people attracted towards and evinced enthusiasm in accepting and adjoining the Naqshbandi order.³

Allahabad

Sirhindi did not neglect the importance of Allahabad as well. He himself seems to have visited this city on one occasion.⁴ He sent Syed Mohibullah, who belonged to Manipur, near Allahabad, as his deputy in the city. Previously Syed

1. Ibid, p. 365
2. Hazarat-ul-Quds , p.342.
3. Zubdat-ul-Mugamat, p. 366
4. Maktubat, Vol. I. Letter No.313.

Mohibullah was a disciple of Shaikh Muhammad bin Fazlullah of Burhanpur. He resided there for a long time where he often visited Mir Muhammad Nu'man to be informed of the teachings of the Naqshbandi silsilah. Through these frequent visits to Mir's Khanaqah, where the letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi were read out and his teachings imparted to the audience, Syed Mohibullah came to know about Sirhind. The latter dispatched an epistle to him even before he met him at Sirhind.¹ He was so impressed by the personality of Shaikh Ahmad that he went to Sirhind to join his mystic discipline and perform spiritual exercises under him. The Shaikh after giving him the Khilafat asked Mohibullah to stay at Allahabad for the popularization of the Naqshbandi silsilah.²

Deoband

Deoband was another town to which Ahmad Sirhindi turned his attention. He deputed Shaikh Ahmad, one of his close Khalifas, to this town for the propagation of the Naqshbandi silsilah. Shaikh Ahmad himself belonged to Deoband and had spent a long time of his life in travelling various places. Later he came into contact with Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p. 382

2. *Ibid*, pp. 382-83

studied Tasawwuf and theology under him. He is also reported to have accompanied Sirhindi during his journey of eastern U.P.¹ He also visited Burhanpur and received Khilafat from Shaikh Fazlullah but soon he again turned to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Having performed spiritual exercises under his guidance for several years Ahmad Deobandi received the Khilafatnama.² Initially he worked for some time in his native town and attracted many people towards him. But afterwards he shifted to Agra where some Qasim Khan, the subadar of Bangal, came into his contact and got himself converted to a sunni from shia after being impressed by his spiritual ecstasy. He also visited Bengal on the request of Qasim Khan. The Hazarat-ul-Quds says that Ahmad Deobandi earned great fame and popularity there. Finally he returned to Agra and died there at the age of seventy.³

Bengal & Bihar

Shaikh Ahmad also paid attention to the provinces of Bengal and Bihar. He deputed Shaikh Hamqad Bengali to Malda as his chief disciple in Bengal. He first came into contact

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds , p. 349

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, pp. 50-51

with Shaikh Ahmad in Agra.¹ It is reported that in those days he did not at all believe in Sufism and even hated Ahmad Sirhindi on account of his mystical thought. In the mean time Shaikh Ahmad visited Agra and stayed with his old friend Mufti Khwaja Abdur Rahman. Shaikh Hameed had already reached there from Lahore and was staying at the house of the same Mufti. On being informed of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's arrival he shifted to another place with a view to avoid the company of the former. But after two days, due to some important matter, he had to come to his previous designation where he found Shaikh Ahmad who deeply influenced Shaikh Hameed by attracting him towards his spiritual excellence.² Hameed later decided to accompany Shaikh Ahmad to Sirhind and subsequently joined his mystic discipline. After performing spiritual exercises for a several years Shaikh Hameed received Khilafat and was asked by his pir to go to his home-town Malda in Bengal in order to popularize the Naqshbandi silsilah there.³

On reaching Bengal Shaikh Ahmad started his activities there. Both Hazarat-ul-Quds and Zubdat-ul-Maqamat state that

1. Zubmat-ul-Maqamat, p.354.

2. Ibid., p. 355.

3. Ibid., p.135.

he also earned great fame and many people visited his Khanqah at Malda to obtain spiritual blessings.¹

As far as Bihar was concerned Shaikh Ahmad selected Patna as the centre of his mission in that province. It was Shaikh Nur Muhammad whom Shaikh Ahmad sent to Patna to introduce his religious and spritual mission. Moreover, after some time, another Khalifa Shaikh Abdul Haiya was also deputed to Patna for this task.

Himself a native of Patna, Shaikh, Nur Muhammad, after visiting many places of religious and spiritual importance and benefiting from various sufi saints, first came into contact with Khwaja Baqi Billah. The Khwaja later assigned him to the care of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi who deeply influenced him. After receiving spritiual training for some years, he became received the Khilafat of Shaikh Ahmad² who in 1015 A.H./1606 A.D. asked him to stay at Patna, his native place, for dessiminating the Nawshbandi silsilah in Bihar. In compliance with his pir's instructions Nur Muhammad reached there and constructed a small house (hut) near the bank of rive Ganges.³ Thousands of people came to

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p. 317

2. Zubdat-ul-Mugamat, p. 351

3. Ibid.

his Khanqah to obtain his spiritual blessings. Shaikh Nur Muhammad imparted religious and mystical education to his visitors and described the teachings of the Naqshbandi silsilah to them.¹

Shaikh Abdul Hai was another Khalifa of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi to have been sent to Patna. Originally a native of Hisar Shadman, a town in Asfaniyan, Central Asia (now in Tajikistan in U.S.S.R.), he migrated to India and settled down in Patna where he came to know about Shaikh Ahmad's spiritual greatness. Subsequently he reached Sirhind and joined the mystic discipline of the Shaikh. At Sirhind Abdul Hai also compiled, (on the instruction of Khwaja Muhammad Ma'sum, Sirhindi's son) the second volume of Shaikh Ahmad's maktubat.² After imparting spiritual education and giving mystical training to Shaikh Abdul Hai, Ahmad Sirhindi conferred his Khilafat upon and asked him to go to Patna for the popularization to the Naqshbandi teachings and thought.³

Contrary to Shaikh Nur Muhammad, who lived secluded life near the river Ganges, Abdul Hai took his abode in the

1. Ibid., p.353.

2. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p. 376

3. Ibid.

heart of the city and devoted himself to his master's mission.¹ Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was so greatly impressed by the mystical performance of Shaikh Abdul Hai that he wrote in a very high esteem about him in one of his letters to Shaikh Nur Muhammad.² The author of Hazarat-ul-Quds says that in a short span of time Shaikh Abdul Hai became the centre of attention of thousands of people. Even ulama, sufis, and government official came to him and obtained his spiritual blessings. Very soon he earned fame and popularity. A large number of people from all sections of the society became his murid and many of them received Khilafat.³ Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi regarded the presence of his khalifas in Patna as a great achievement. Once he wrote to some of his sincere friends that the existence of both Shaikh Nur Muhammad and Shaikh Abdul Hai in Patna at a time is the conjunction of two auspicious stars.⁴

Kashmir

Though the Hazarat-ul-Quds and the Zubdat-ul-Maqamat are silent about Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's mission in Kashmir

1. Zubdat-ul-Muqamat, p. 376
2. Maktubat, Vol. II, L.No. 85
3. Hazarat-ul-Quds, (Persian) II, p. 366
4. Ibid Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p. 376

but the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani reveal that the Khalifas of the saint were also deputed to this hilly state. So far as Sirhindi's relations with the Kashmiri ulama and sufis were concerned, he had been in close contact with some of them during his studies at Siyalkot. Both Maulana Muhammad Kamal and Shaikh Ya'qub Surafi Kubrawi, under whom Sirhindi completed his higher education, belonged to Kashmir. Shaikh Ahmad's fast friend Maulana Hasan Kāshmiri, who first introduced him to Khwaja Baqi Billah, came from Kashmir. Moreover, the Shaikh also is reported to have visited Kashmir on Jahangir's invitation.

Punjab

As far as Shaikh Ahmad's native state Punjab was concerned, it drew more and more attention of the saint for the propagation of his mystic and religious mission. He himself resided at Sirhind which was an important town of Punjab at that time. Many of his disciples and Khalifas had gathered there after coming from far and near. The Shaikh, despite his busy schedule of prayer and meditation, attended his followers, taught them Islamic theology, imparted spiritual education to them and guided their mystical performance. Moreover, the local population and the inhabitants of the adjoining areas also thronged to Shaikh Ahmad for spiritual solace. Many of them approached him for

being aware of the different aspects of the religious laws, the Shariat, many visited him to squinch their spiritual thirst, many of them desired to listen to his discourses and a large number of people went to the Shaikh's Khanqah only in order obtain his spiritual blessings. The saint fulfilled their desires and all of them gained their goals. All these notwithstanding, the Khalifas of the Shaikh also worked for the development of his master's mission in his own home-town. Moreover, the sons of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also participated with full enthusiasm in their father's mystic and religious activities. His eldest son Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq assisted his father in training the disciples and other spiritual matters. He also supervised other important matters of the Khanqah both in the presence and absence of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. After the sad demise of Khwaja Muhammad Sidiq in 1025 A.H./1616 A.D. the whole responsibility of the Khanqah fell to Khwaja Muhammad Saeed and Khwaja Muhammad Ma'sum. Both these brothers played important part in the development of their father's religious task. All the visitors of the Khanqah were highly impressed by their scholarly approach and spiritual attainments. These brothers maintained his father's traditions even during his imprisonment and his journeys to various places alongwith the royal army.

Moreover, Shaikh Badruddin, another Khalifa of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, also actively participated in the popularization of the Naqshbandi silsilah in Sirhind and the surrounding areas. Shaikh Badruddin Sirhindi had been a student of Shaikh Ahmad and received spiritual education under him. It is reported that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi trained Badruddin step by step in his mystical discipline with as much devotion as he had for his son. Shaikh Badruddin joined Shaikh Ahmad's mystic discipline at the age of fifteen and lived with his spiritual mentor for a considerable long time.¹ He is also reported to have compiled and translated some works on sufis and sufism but these could not survive. He produced the famous work, Hazarat-ul-Quds, on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and other saints of the Naqshbandi silsilah in two volumes. Badruddin initiated many persons into his own mystic discipline. Even his uncle and some ladies of his family joined his spiritual circle. The Naqshbandi - Mujaddidi tazkiras reveal him a popular sufi among the inhabitants of Sirhind town.²

Next to Sirhind, Shaikh Ahmad turned to Lahore which was the most important city of Punjab at that time. After

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds , P. 386

2. Ibid, pp. 387-413

receiving Khilafat from Khwaja Baqi Billah, he himself had visited Lahore where large number of ulama, mushaikh, eminent Muslims and even common people had showed great enthusiasm and respect to him, and his religious mission. He now decided to make this city a permanent centre of his religious and mystic activities. He appointed his Khalifa, Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq, to this task. Originally he belonged to Kishm in Badakhshan. But later he migrated to India and joined the royal service under Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan who introduced him to Khwaja Baqi Billah. Sadiq kept the company of the saint and performed spiritual exercises under him. After the Khwaja's death he became a disciple of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi who after bestowing his khilafat upon sent him to Lahore (as his deputy) for the dissemination of the Naqshbandi silsilah.¹ He was so keenly devoted to Ahmad Sirhindi that the latter used to say that he was very much indebted to Shaikh Tahir Lahori. His simplicity and modesty was famous among the other disciples of his master. Shaikh Ahmad loved Shaikh Tahir so much that he sometimes performed the congregational prayer (Namaḥ-i-Jamat) behind him. Shaikh Tahir was also the tutor of Sirhindi's sons.²

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds pp. 345 - 47.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp. 340-41

Later on, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi authorised Shaikh Tahir to initiate disciples into both the Naqshbandi and the Qadri silsilahs.¹ There Shaikh Tahir dedicated himself to the development of his master's mission. Many people of all corners throughed to him. He imparted the teachings of the mentor to all his visitors and disciples.² According to Zubdat-ul magamat he did not accept and even had not any association with the non-spiritual persons. He earned his livelihood through legal means by transcribing the copies of manuscripts.³ He would visit Sirhind every year⁴ till his death on 20 Muharram 1040 A.H./29 August 1630 A.D.⁵

After the death of Shaikh Tahir Lahori, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi did not leave this important city with out his Khalifa. He assigned this task to Maulana Abdul Wahid and Maulana Amanullah. They both zealously worked for Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's mission by accelarating the work of Shaikh Tahir.⁶

1. Zubdat-ul-Magamat, p. 342.

2. Ibid, pp. 343- 46

3. Ibid., p. 346

4. Ibid

5. Hazarat-ul-Quds , p. 327

6. Zubdat-ul-Magamat, pp. 388-89

The other eminent Khalifa of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi who played a significant role in the history of Muslim Punjab was Shaikh Adam Banuri who throughout his life fought against the religious innovations as well as the non-Islamic trends among the then Muslim society. After instructing him on the mystic path and imparting spiritual education to him, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi bestowed his Khilafat on him. The author of Hazarat-ul-Quds says that amr bil ma'ruf, the command to do what is lawful, and nepiunil munkar, the prohibition to do what is unlawful, was the main object of Shaikh Adam's life.¹

The Shaikh resided at Banur, his native village. A large number of people, especially the military men, felt attracted towards him and became his murid. Whosoever desired to join his mystic circle, halqa-i-iradat, Shaikh Adam first asked him to perform tauba, repentance, and then to be strict on the Shariat, the laws of Islam. It is reported that many sufis of different silsilahs also became the followers of Shaikh Adam Banuri.² In 1053 A.H./1643 A.D. Shaikh Adam went to Mecca for Hajj pilgrimage and then visited the tomb of the Holy Prophet at Medina where he died after staying for some years and was buried near the grave of the third Pious Caliph, Usman bin Affan.³

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.383.

2. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.384.

3. Ibid, p. 385

CHAPTER-V

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND MYSTICAL IDEOLOGY

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1. The Concept of Tajdeed and the Millennium

The idea of tajdeed developed at a very early stage of Islamic history. When, after the completion of the Pious Caliphate, (Khilafat-i-Rashidah) in 40 A.H./ 664 A.D., the tyrant Kingdom based on many non-Islamic ideas, was established and the Muslim rulers accepted and followed the Iranese as well as Roman precepts and principles, a feeling of revival of the prophetic tradition and usage evolved in the religious class of the Muslim Society. This consciousness of the Muslim religious class got encouragement also from the sayings of the Holy Prophet himself who is reported to have said that the best of his community was the generation in which he was sent, then those who followed them, then those who followed them.¹ In fact this Hadith worked as a basis for the idea of revival of the Prophetic usage among the Muslims. That is why, the ulama of the muslim religious class, through out the centuries have been making efforts to recapture the Prophet's period, which was the most ideal period of Islamic history. In other words the task of reviv-

1. For details See, Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume II. Chapter I, (the book of the greatness of the companions of the Holy Prophet).

al of the Prophetic traditions has always been a meritorious action that could be performed by a Muslim.

Indistinguishable from the idea of revival of the Prophet's usage there is the concept of tajdeed, or the religious renewal, which also has its source in the Hadith literature. According to Sunan-i-Abu Daud the Holy Prophet of Islam said, "God will send to this community on the eve of every century a man who will renew its religion".¹ On this account the person to renew the religion of the Muslim Community is called Mujaddid or renewer or reformer. It is maintained that many persons, e.g., Umar bin Abdul Aziz, Imam Shafi', Mohammad bin Idris, Ibn-Suraij, Imam Baqillani Muhammad bin Tayyab, Imam Asfrayyini Ahmad bin Muhammad, Imam Ghazali, Imam Fakhruddin Razi, Ibn-i-Daqq Abid Muhammad bin Ali, Imam Bulqini Sirajuddin, Jalaluddin Suyuti and others, have accordingly been entitled as Mujaddid of their respective centuries.² The main responsibility of a Mujaddid is to save the Muslim society from the darkness of infidelity (Kufr), polytheism (Shirk) and other non Islamic trends,

1. Sunan Abu Daud, Vol. II Cairo 1952. P. 518/ also Nu'mani, p.12
B.A. Faruqi, Mujaddid's Conception Tawheed, Lahore, 1940, p.40.
Friedmann, p.13.
2. The Mujaddid's conception of Tauhid, pp. 1-2.

and reintroduce the Islamic Principles in it. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam God would send a prophet in order to preach His Shariat amongst the people of the world. But after the Prophet of Islam there would not appear any prophet. Accordingly, the Ulama of Islam have been assigned the responsibility of reviving the Islamic laws, i.e., Shariat and renewing the religion. The Mujaddid does not bring any new Shariat but revives the existing one, come down to the Prophet of Islam. He invites Muslims to adopt Islam in its pure form. He doesn't at all compromise with anti-Islamic thought at any religious point.¹ Infact a Mujaddid's nature and feelings are very much harmonious with those of a prophet of God.² But it is to be pointed out that he (Mujaddid) is not a prophet. He works as follower of the Prophet of Islam and reminds his fellow followers to be determined on the path of Shariat. It is also to be mentioned here that Mujaddid does not claim this title for himself whereas a prophet has to claim himself a prophet and asks his people to join and follow him if any body denies a

1. In this connection see, Maulana Muhammad Miyan, Ulma-i-Hind ka Shandar Mazi, Vol. I, Delhi 1985, pp. 235-38/ also, Tazkirah Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, pp. 12-24 / also, Abul A'la Maududi, Tajdeed wa Ihya-i-Din, Delhi 1986, pp. 42-51.

2. Ibid, p.43.

prophet or rejects his mission, he becomes an infidel whereas the denial of a Mujaddid and his teachings does not mean the expulsion from the faith. A prophet is well informed of his own prophethood and receives God's Revelations (Wahi) through the angel, Gabriel. Mujaddid knows nothing even of himself whether he has been sent to fulfil the task of tajdeed or assigned the dignity of a Mujaddid. He makes all his observations and decides all matters on the basis of Kitab-wa-Sunnah, i.e. the Quran and the Hadith.¹

As mentioned earlier, many Ulama and Sufis had been entitled as Mujaddid of their centuries. But, on the other hand, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was given the title of Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, the renewer of the second millennium of Islam. According to Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, it was Mulla Abdul Hakeem Siyalkoti who first of all addressed Ahmad Sirhindi with this title.² It appears that the Shaikh had accepted himself as Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani. The Maktubati-i-Imam-i Rabbani also contained references in this regard. In one of his letters Shaikh Ahmad writes, "We should know that after every hundred years there has been a Mujaddid in Islam. But there is great difference between the Mujaddid of the cen-

1. Maududi, op.cit., p.43.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.176.

tury and the Mujaddid of the millennium. These two types of mujaddids are as different to each other as there is difference between hundred and thousand. It is the Mujaddid of the millennium through whom the followers of Islam, whether the saints of their times, receive God's favours and blessings."¹

So far as the origin of the concept of Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani is concerned, all the main sources of Islam i.e., the Quran and the Hadith, are totally silent.² However, the author of the Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiyya tries to establish authenticity of the concept. He quotes two hadithes which reveal that the Holy Prophet of Islam had predicted the appearance of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi as the Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani.³ According to one of these hadithes, "A man will arise at the beginning of the eleven century who will be great light and whose name will be the same as mine; he will arise amidst tyrant kings; thousands of men will -----"

1. Maktubat Vol. II Letter No.4

2. Maulana Mohammad Miyan tries to establish the appearance of the Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani on the basis of Kitab-wa-sunna. See, Ulma-i-Hind Ka Shandar Mazi Vol.I, pp. 239-249.

3. Kamaluddin Muhammad Ahsan, Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiyya (Urdu trans.) Lahore, n.d., part I, pp. 37-38.

enter Paradise through his intercession."¹ The other hadith says, "There will be a man in my nation who will be called a conjoiner, through whose intercession there will enter Paradise so-and-so."² The Shaikh himself writes to his son Khwaja Muhammad Masum, "Praise be to Allah who created me as a conjoiner between two oceans and a pacifier between two parties."³ In another letter, addressing his eldest son Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi refers to his times as being 'full of darkness' and says that at such times, on the eve of the millennium, during the pre-Islamic period a steadfast prophet (paighambar-i-ulul-azm)⁴ was sent to the ancient communities (Ummam-i-Sabiqah), in order to establish a new Shariah. However in the Islamic community, which is the best of all and whose Prophet is the last prophet, this is not possible. The Muslim ulama have therefore been awarded the same rank that had previously been given to the prophets of Israel.⁵ A mujaddid is chosen

1. See Jami-ul-Darar

2. See, Jama'ul-Jawami'

3. Maktubat, Vol. II, letter no. 6 (On this point also see Jamil Ahmad Sharaquri, Irshadat-i-Mujaddid Lahore, pp. 252-56).

4. For details see Holy Quran, XLVI - 34.

5. It is an allusion to the hadith: "'Ulama of my community are like the prophets of Israel."

amongst from them on the eve of every century, not to bring a new shariat, but to revive existing one. This is especially necessary after the passage of thousand years. This is the time in which steadfast prophet was sent during the pre-Islamic period as an 'ordinary' prophet could not have performed the task. When a period such as this occurs during Islamic era, the situation requires a man of perfect knowledge who is capable of fulfilling the task of the steadfast prophet. The Shaikh quotes a verses which means, "If the bountiful Holy Spirit will help again, others will also do thing that Jesus had done." ¹

According to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi the views held by earlier sufis, that the Haqiat-i-Muhammadi (the reality of Prophet Muhammad) is superior to the Haqiqat-i-Kabah (the reality of kaba), is not correct. He is of the opinion that the stage of Haqiqat-i-Kabah is the highest haqiqat or reality. According to him, then, one stage lower, there is a stage of Haqiqat-i-Quran and then exist haqiqat-i-Muhammadi. Sirhindi says that with the advent of the Millepnum the whole above structure undergoes a fundamental transformation. He writes, "A thousands years after the death of the prophet a time is coming in which haqiqat-i-Muhammadi will ascend from its

1. Maktubat, Vol. I letter No. 234.

position and unite with the position of haqiqat-i-Kaba. At this time Haqiqat-i-Muhammadi receives the name of Haqiqat-i-Ahmadi and becomes the manifestation of the Essence of God. Both blessed names (Muhammad and Ahmad) unite with their meaning. The former position of Haqiqat-i-Muhammadi will remain vacant until Isa (Jesus) descends and enacts the shariat of the prophet of Islam. At that time Haqiqat-i-Isawi will ascent from its position and establish itself in the position of Haqiqat-i-Muhammadi that had remained vacant."¹ In another letter Shaikh Ahmad clearly describes the hierarchy of realities (Haqaiq) with regard to the Millennium. He says, "The prophet of Islam had in his life time two individuations (taqyyun), the bodily human and the spiritual angelic. The two individuations were symbolized by the loops of the two mims of his name. The bodily individuation guaranteed the uninterrupted relationship between the Prophet and his community, and consequently ensured its spiritual well-being. The spiritual, on the other hand, directed itself towards the Divine and received the continuous flow of inspiration emanating from that source. A proper balance was thus maintained between the world and the

1. Sirhindi, Mabda'-wa-Ma'ad (Persian Text with Urdu translation), Karanchi, 1984, pp.78-79 (Urdu, pp. 204-6), also, Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani Vol. I, letter no. 260.

spiritual aspects of the Prophet's personality, and the Islamic community was continuously under guidance, both prophetic and divine. Since the Prophet's death, however, his human individuation has been gradually weakening while the spiritual one has been steadily gaining strength. Within a thousand years the human individuation disappeared altogether. Its symbol, the first mim of Muhammad, disappeared along with it and was replaced by an alif standing for divinity (Uluhiyat). Muhammad came to be Ahmad. He was transformed into a purely spiritual being, no longer interested in the affairs of the world. The disappearance of his human attributes facilitated his spiritual ascent and enabled him to reach the highest possible stage and to free himself from mundane attractions; it had, however, an adverse impact on his community, which lost the lights of prophetic guidance emanating from the Prophet's human aspect. This is why infidelity and innovation have gained the upper hand, while the lights of Islam and Sunnah have grown dim."¹

1. Maktubat Vol. III, letter no. 96.

Freedman writes, "Sirhindi is thus in agreement with the view that the ideal period of Islamic History was between his own spiritual progress and his worldly activities, directed to guide the community in the ways of God. Sirhindi also agrees that the ideal prophetic period was followed by a gradual decline, caused by the growing imbalance in the performance of the two prophetic tasks he does not, however, subscribe to the view that

Sirhindi considers the Millennium as the beginning of the last stage of Islamic history.¹ According to him the period of the Prophet and the Millennium is so close that it is difficult to differentiate between them.² He says that at this time (the Millennium) the perfections of prophecy (Kamalat-i-Nabuwwat), which have been gradually disappearing since the death of the Prophet of Islam will reappear in persons who deserve this blessing because they are the Prophet's heirs and followers. The person who possesses these perfections is the 'Mujaddid' of the Millennium (Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani). He is called upon to fulfil some of the Prophet's tasks with regards to his community. His knowledge is derived from the light of the prophecy which regain their splendour. It is far beyond the knowledge of the ulama and gnosis of the sufis. Shaikh Ahmad says that

f.note contd. from prev.

this decline is irreversible. As soon as it reached its lowest point, with the complete disappearance of the human attributes of the prophet and the absolute reverence of his ties with his community, the trend was reversed and a new development set in." (Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, p.).

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1. This idea has been derived from the tradition of the Prophet who is reported to have said, "My Community is like the rain it is not known whether the beginning of it is better or the end". See Ibn Qutaybah, Tawil Mukhtalaf al-Hadith, Cairo 1326, pp, 139-41.
 2. See Maktubat Vol. I, letter no. 261.

whatever blessing the Islamic community receives during this period (the Millennium) is through the mediation of the mujaddid of the Millennium.¹

In another letter as well, Shaikh Ahmad writes to his senior Khalifa Mir Muhammad Nu'man, "The period of the last stage of this community starts on the completion of a thousand years after the death of the Holy Prophet, when starts the second Millennium. The period of a thousand years is closely related to the circumstances and has deeply impressed the process of alteration and change in this (Islamic) community, the former's attributes with its freshness, have reappeared in those who have come later; These attributes, on the beginning of the second Millennium, illuminated the Islamic community by reviving and renewing the Shariat".²

Thus we see that the concept of tajdeed and the Millennium holds a very important position in the development of the personality and thought of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhind. Friemann says, "The idea of tajdeed, with which Sirhindi at a relatively early period of his life, is well documented in

1. For details see, Maktubat, Vol.I, Letters No.260, 301/
Vol. II, Letter No.4 / Vol. III, Letter No.124.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, letter No. 261.

the classical Islamic sources, though the derived concept of tajdeed-i-Alf is apparently Sirhindi's innovation."¹

1. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, p. 20.

2. CONCEPT OF TAWHID

As far as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's concept of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud the Unity of Appearance, is concerned, it is generally believed that he vehemently criticised Muhijaddin Ibn-i-Arab and totally rejected his spiritual thought ideology, i.e. the concept of a monism wahdat-ul-wujud. but in fact his rejection of the great spanish sufi and his thought is far from being as complete and unequivocal. His criticism of differs widely from the criticism of the ulama. It is therefore seems appropriate to briefly study Shaikh Ahmad's attitude towards ibn-i-Arabi before proceeding to his criticism of the latter's thought. The Maktubat Shaikh Rabbani reveal that Sirhindi's criticism of some certain aspects of Ibn-i-Arabi's thought does not prevent him from appreciating his contribution to the development of Islamic mysticism as a whole. He recommends the study of Ibn-i-Arabi's works and considers them indispensable to the proper appreciation of his own spiritual insights. Moreover, he frequently quotes Ibn-i-Arabi's works in his own letters and treatises. The author of Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi says that Sirhindi considered Ibn-i-Arabi a great saint and regarded him in high esteem.¹ Shaikh Ahmad

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.211.

himself writes in one of his letters that Ibn-i-Arabi, despite his unlawfulness utterances (Shath Khalif-i-Jawaz), , belongs to the group of faithfuls and is known among the great Muslim saints. We should accept him as such and should not be agreed with his mystic thought which are full of danger and may lead the beginner to herery and infidelity.¹ In another Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi says, "It is the Shaikh (Ibn-i-Arabi) with whome I sometimes fight and sometimes agree."² He further writes in the same letter, "we latecomers have also benefited from the blessings of that great man and learned a great deal of his mystical insights. May God give him the best reward for this".³

So far as Sirhindis own concept of Tawhid as well as his criticism of Ibn-i-Arabi's thought, were concerned, it is better to briefly discuss first of all Ibn-i-Arabi's concept of Tawheed. According to Islamic ideology Tawhid literally means oneness of God. But Ibn-i-Arabi thinks that Being is one which exists. That being is Allah. Everything else in His manifestation. Hence the world is identical with Allah. According to him there is an identity between the existence and essence or substance and attributes

1. Maktubat, Vol.III, Letter No.77.

2. Ibid., Letter No.79.

3. Ibid.

(Zat-o-Sijat) of Allah. As the world is the manifestation (tajalli) of Allah's attributes, it is therefore identical with Him.¹ In other words the Zat or Being of Allah is identical with His Sifat or attributes. And these attributes express themselves in the form of tujalliyyat manifestations, e.g., the world. Hence there is an identity between the world and His Being. According to Quran Allah has many other names which are called Asma-i-Ilahi a Divine Names. These express His attributes. There is no difference between those Divine Names and His Musamma the Named that is His very Being. These Divine Name, though they are many, denote the same existence, i.e., the existence of Allah.²

In bringing out his theory of identity between Allah and the world Ibn-i-Arabi has to proceed either the negation of the world or from the affirmation of Allah. As He and His existence cannot be denied, Ibn-i-Arabi, therefore, negates the existence of the world. He holds that it is merely nominal, unreal, imaginary and objectively non-existent. It has no existence its own. Allah alone exists.³

1. Abdur Razzaq Qashani, Sharh-i-Furus-ul-Hikam, Cairo, 1321 A.H., pp.8-9.

2. Sharh-i-Furus-ul-Hikam, p.233.
Faruqi, p.90

3. Sharh-i-Furus-ul-Hikam, p.117.
Faruqi, p.91

When both Allah and the world are identical, the world is supposed to be Allah. This is what the concept of wahdat-ul-wajud of Ibn-e-Arabi means further explaining his point of view Ibn-i-Arabi says that Allah is Asl or thing and the world is His Zill or adumbration. According to him the Zill or adumbration is the appearance of asl or the thing. It is asl ppearing, manifesting itself. Hence the world is identical with Allah.¹ Ibn-i-Arabi holds the confession of faith, the Kalema, (There is no object of worship but Allah) not in its proper form but he intrepret it as, "None exists but Allah".

Similarly, Ibn-i-Arabi seeks an identity between man and Allah. He maintains that the relation between man and Allah is that of identity of immanence. It means there is a nearness or Qurb between Him and a man.² This theory is actually based on a Quranic verse which indicates that Allah is nearer unto man than his life-artery. Abu-i-ARabi takes unto man than his life-artery.³ Ibn-i-Arabi takes this Hadith in the sense that God himself is the very essence of

1. Sharh-i-Furus-ul-Hikam, p.113, 116/
Faruqi, pp.93-94.

2. Sharh-i-Fusus-ul-Hikam, pp.77-79/
Faruqi, p.94.

3. "We are nearer unto him than his life-artery".

the limbs and parts of man. To support this theory Ibn-i-Arabi quotes another which means that Allah created man after His own Image. All these things result in that possesses all the attributes of God. It is His attributes that are manifested in man. In other words they are bodily there in man.¹ Moreover, Ibn-i-Arabi explains his concept of Wahdat-ul-Wajud in other way also. According to him this concept is also connected with the divine Prophetic Tradition "I was hidden Treasure; I wished that I should be known, so I created the creatures". Commenting upon Ibn-i-Arabi's explanation of this Prophetic Tradition Dr. B.A. Faruqi says, "The purpose of creation, according to him, is the yearning on the part of Allah to know Himself."² Faruqi further says, "The yearning to know Himself is the yearning for self-perfection. This perfection consists in expression or realisation of His own self through the temporal and eternal qualities that manifest themselves in the world-process; in other words in actualising all the qualities that were potentially there in Him. Thus from whatever side we start, Ibn-i-Arabi unambiguously

 1. Sharh-i-Fusus-ul-Hikam, p.252.
 Faruqi, p.95.

2. Ibid.

leads to Wahdat-ul-Wujud",¹

This doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud had a great hold upon the mind of the people in medieval period. India also had a long tradition of belief in this concept. Through the Bhakti movement it had percolated into the consciousness of the masses. Both mystics and philosophic believed in it. Even many renowned Muslim saints had declared the experience of Wahdat-ul-Wujud as the summum bonum of their attainment.² Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also believed in this concept since his very young age. His father Shaikh Abdul Faruqi had been a great admirer of Wahdat-ul-Wujud. He used to teach Ibn-i-Arabi's Fusus-ul-Hu'kam and Futuh-at-i-Makkiyah to his students with great devotion and zeal. Many contemporary Ulama and sufis had studied supervism under his guidance. Shaikh Ahmad had also been trained as a mystic in the Chishtiyah Silsilah and then given the permission by his father¹ to initiate his own disciples.³ So, Ahmad Sirhindi had inherited the concept of Wahadat-ul-Wujud from his father. For

1. The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid, pp.95-96.

2. In this connection see, Rizvi, Muslim Revivalist Movements/ Shakti Muahmmad Ikram, Rud-i-Kausar. Muhammad Iqbal Mujaddidi, Abdullah Khweshri Qurui, Lahore, 1972.

3. See, Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.134/
Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.31/
Mabda'wa Maud, pp.11-12/
Burhan, Vol.99, No.5, (May 1987), pp.34-35.

several years and even after becoming a disciple of Khwaja Baqi Billah, who himself supported this concept, Shaikh Ahmad would believe in Wahdat-ul-Wujud. He looked upon its realization as the highest in mystic experience. Having joined the Khwaja's discipline Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi started his mystic training under him and made remarkable progress.¹ During the experiment Shaikh Ahmad first of all experienced Wahdat-ul-Wujud. This stage so deeply overwhelmed him that he lost his balance a little and expressed his sentiments in poetry of a highly emotional strain and somewhat heretical trend. It appears from his Maktubat that this condition prevailed for several years. And in very those days he once wrote the heretical verses to his spiritual mentor.² But the latter corrected his disciple's exaggerated mystic ideas with regard to his ecstatic experience. The Khwaja Report him within the necessary discipline. Sirhindi himself says in letter addressed to some shaikh Sufi, "Suddenly Almighty God bestowed His grace and favours upon me and all hindrances in my way were removed. All type of knowledge which had previously informed me about Union with God and Wahdat-ul-Wujud disappeared. The surrounding penetrations, nearness

1. See Maktubat-i-Iman-i-Rabbani, Vol. I, Letter No.192.

2. Ibid, Letter No.31.

and personal association which had appeared to me in this stage, also disappeared. I came to know with certainty that all above stages and knowledge have no relation with God. The surrounding and the nearness of Allah is theoretical as is generally believed and approved by true persons, i.e. Ulama. May God give them reward of their effort. Allah is not United with anything. Allah is Allah and the world is world. He is Incomparable. Unparalleled where as the world is without these nature.¹ Thus, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi first of all experienced wahdat-ul-wujud and felt that he existed only in God and had no existence of his own. This he called the stage of Wujudiyat. Commenting upon the stage of mystical experience Dr. B.A. Faruqi says, "The object of mysticism at this stage is to turn the belief based on faith or reason into sure and certain knowledge based on direct experience with regard to God and relation to man and the world, - that God exists, that He is immovable in mean and the world and that His relation with the world is that of identity. This stage lasts for a long interval and the Mujaddid realises it in all its detail it in all its detail and in all its depth."²

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1. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.31.

2. Faruqi, pp. 96-97.

Any how, during these experiences the stage of Wahdat-ul-Wujud soon passed and there came greater balance in Sirhindi's ecstatic emotions. A little later he came to know that the tawhid-i-wujudi was not the reality.¹ Through his mystic experience, the conviction grew in him that the Wahdat-ul-Wujud was not the highest stage. He then advanced to a higher stage than the previous one where he felt that his existence was a shadow of the existence of God, separate from His existence as the shadow is separate from the substance Sirhindi called this the stage of Zilliyat or a dumbration. With regard to the relation between God and the world Shaikh Ahmad at this stage found that the world has a being of its own, though it is only the zill or shadow, having resemblance of the reality. According to B.A. Faruqi a sense of duality arose in him and he seriously began to doubt Wahdat-ul-Wujud.² It is to be mentioned here that Sirhindi had not immediately rejected Wahdat-ul-Wujud. But he was not sure of its certainty. That was why he did not possess the clarity and connection to deny this mystical concept. Farooqi is rightly of the opinion that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, due to his long association with Wahdat-ul-Wujud, did not want to reject it at all but rather he wanted to con-

1. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.292.

2. Faruqi, p.97.

tinue his affiliation with this concept. It wa only because of this feeling that the desired to remain on this stage, i.e., the stage of Zilliyat as it was somehw related to the stage of WAhdat-ul-Wujud. To quest Faruqi, "Indeed he yearns to stay on in this stage because it affinity wit Wujudiyat, - the world is seen as Zill or adumbration of the Asl or the Real i.e. of Allah."¹ In nut shell he found himself reluctant to leave behind the stage of Zilliyat.

The Shaikh continued his spiritual experiments, and, in course of time, he proceeded further in the development of the mystic consciouness. Hence the duality of God and the world became clear to him. In other words, he felt that his own existence was different fro the existence of God. He also felt that his existence was dependept upon God's will for its being. It was subservient to God, yet separate. Sirhind realised that it was the true and the highest mystic stage. He called it the stage Ubudiyat or abdiyat means subservience to God in separate existence. Here he also came to know that his first experience was the result of his intoxication. Due to his love for God and his strong desire in this regard, he had been so submerged in emotion that he had felt that he was not separate from Him. He came to feel

1. Ibid.

that Wahdat-ul-Wujud was not the reality, it was only a feeling, an experience.¹ He clearly came to know that the world and God or he or God are two. He was fully satisfied with this and realised that all his previous mystic experiences were really subjective and unreliable;; - the did not correspond to objective reality. This is what he termed as Wahdat-ul Shuhud or Tawhid-i-Shuhudi, the unity of Appearance.² was convinced that the stage Wahdat-ul-Shuhud was the truth. No room was left now the identity of God and man. He ultimately came to the conclusion to speak of an experience of God, i.e. Wahdat-ul- Wujud, which the sufis do is blasphemy. There is no guarantee of truth in it be as mid all mystic experience reveal the final truth, At the stage of Wahdat-ul-Shuhud, Shaikh Ahmad satisfactorily experienced that "God is far and far above the grasp of our faculty of reason and Kashf. He writes in one of his letters that Allah is beyond the beyond, and again beyond the Beyond."³ He also realised that neither His being nor His attributes are directly knowable. //

1. See Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.43.

2. See Ibid.

3. Maktubat, Vol. II, p.1.

As for the mystic experience, the Shaikh writes that the followers of other faiths also had mystic consciousness and experience.¹ Hence, in the words of Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi, In view of the contradictions in their experience, mystic experience, by itself, could not be the criterion of spiritual truth."² Sirhindi expressly realised at this stage that Iman-bil-ghab or 'the faith in the Unseen' alone is the truth.³ Consequently he clearly told that the revelation (Wahi) alone is infallible and, there, provides the sole criterion of spiritual truth and, thus, of mystic experiences. According to him any mystic experience which goes against the teaching of the Holy Prophet, who was guided by revelation and was protected by God from error, can be dismissed as the result of 'sukr' intoxication.⁴ In another letter Shaikh Ahmad writes that the experience in a stage of ecstasy was not always reliable as ecstasy of was the condition of intoxication. In this stage the intensity of emotion and depth of feeling were capable of playing tricks even with the mystic consciousness. According to him the higher statics that of 'sobriety' when the senses were

1. Ibid., Vol.I, Letter No.266.
2. I.H. Qureshi, The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent, Delhi 1985, p.171.
3. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letters No.207, 217.
4. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.286.

sufficiently under control to record upon the consciousness of the true nature of the reality.¹

As for Sirhindi's criticism of Ibn-i-Arabi's thought, it must be borne in mind that the arguments of both these saints are mixed up with the description of mystic experience. Shaikh Ahmad starts from what Ibn-i-Arabi considers the final mystic stage, i.e. in God existence and essence or being and attributes (dhat-o-sifat) are identical, and the world or man is the tajalli or emanation of sifat or attributes. In other words all that exists in God, outside whome it could not exist. He Existence is one, and there is nor other existence. This the stage of Wahdat-ul-Wujud.² But to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi existence is of several kinds God's existence in Unique, being self-sustaining, infinite, and timeless. According to him God's attributes exist in Him but are not part of His existence because He can exist without any of these attributes.³

In this connection it is also to be kept in mind that Shaikh Ahmad was not totally against Ibn-i-Arabi. He paid due respect and to Ibn-i-Arabi and He did not deny the

1. Ibid, Letter No. 84

2. For details See, Irshad-ut-Talibin (Ms), ff: 1-15.

3. Maktubat, Vol. II, Letter No.1.

importance of his mystic experience beat tried to judge it with the framework of Islam Dr. Qura'shi rightly says, "It the Mujaddid himself had not been a sufi, he would have been capable of subvertings, the entire sufi thinking. The Mujaddid, however, recognized the volume and importance of the mystic experience and was desirous of disciplining it so that it might not subvert the Fatih through its imbalance."¹ Sirhindi's 'Wahdat-ul-Shuhud' is an advance stage where the mystic reaches when he proceeds further from the stage Wahdat-ul-Wujud. When the mystic passes over to the higher stage he realises the error involved in the stage of Wahdat-ul-Wujud. According to him at this stage the mystic experiences Fana or anihilation. Here he is absorbed in the being of God and utterly forgetfulness with regard to the things other than Him. That is why he sees nothing but God, and considers every thing as Him.² In other words he denies the existence of everything else and affirm the being of Allah alone. Sirhindi poses another example by saying that when the mystic overwhelmed by Wahdat-ul-Wujud looks at the sun, he denies the existence of the stars, whereas the supporter of Wahdat-ul-Shuhud knows that the stars do exist, though sees only the sun. According to Shaikh his (the

1. The Muslim Community of Indo-Pak Sub-continent, p.172.

2. Maktubat, Vol.I, Letter No.122, 291.

Shuhudis) consciousness is in the stage of agyn-ul-yaqin while that of the Wajud remains at the lower stage of ilm-ul-yaqin. The highest stage of consciousness, that of ilm-ul-yaqin, can be reached when the sight of the onlooker is sharpened to such an extent that he can see the stars and the sun simultaneously. It is possible only at the stage of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud.¹ So far as the world is concerned Sirhindi agrees that indeed it is mere imagination (Wahm), but adds that it has been a measure of stability and permanence by divine volition. The world is not imaginary in the sense that it appears only in people's imagination, but in the sense that God created it to be so. It has, therefore, a kind of independent existence, though not comparable with Existence of God.² Shaikh Ahmad said that the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wujud, as such, led common, uninitiated people to heresy and neglect of the Shariah, the laws of Islam.³ According to him God is beyond the reach of our reason and comprehension, and that what the Wujudis regard as immanent are mere fabrication of their own imagination, whom they have raised to the dignity of God. God is high above

1. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.43.

2. See Friedmann, p. 64.

3. Ibid., p.67/ Also, Petter Hardy, Sources of Indian Traditions, New York 1959, p.449.

our Kashf-o-Shuhud or intuition and experience.¹ Sirhindi insisted that there is absolutely no relation between the world and God except that it had been created by Him. As to mean, Shaikh Ahmad holds that the essence of man is the soul, and the soul is the creation of God. Both the world and man are signs that indicate His hidden attributes. God alone has real, actual independent being; and the world has an existence besides God only as a gift of God. In reality the being of the world is not more than appearance appearance without genuine reality.² the relation between man and God is concerned. Sirhindi says that that of abd and anabud or the worshipper and the worshipped. There is also another relation between man and God; that is mariful or communion.³

When we compare Sirhindis Wahdat-ush-Shuhud with Abu-i-Arabis Wahdat-ul-Wahud, we come to the conclusion that the former, by propounding his concept of Tawhid, really has contributed great service to Muslim mystic thought. The moral consequences of Shaikh Ahmad's conception of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud cannot be ignored. Infact Ibn-i-Arabi's concept had played an important part in the development of

1. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.9.
2. Faruqi, pp. 132-135.
3. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letters No.30, 160.

heterodoxy in Indian continent. It also played its role in Akbar's reverence for the sun and fire because to his mind these were the manifestations of God. In the words Ishtiaq Hussain Quraishi Wahdat-ul-Wujud results in quietism. The emphasis upon a separate existence leads to the opposite. A real belief in this concept can hardly create a sense of responsibility for one's own actions.¹ But on the contrary Shaikh Ahmad's Wahdat-ush-Shuhud insists that the criterion of a true mystical experience is its accordance with the tenets of Islam and that all insions in a state of intoxication are not trustworthy.. It tells that Allah can not be known through mystic experiences. To know Him perfectly one will have to totally base on Revelation or the Quran and the Hadith Dr. B.A. Faruqi says, "Evidently this doctrine is as never to religion or Islam as Wahdat-ul Wujud or Unityism' is away from it. - And the Mujaddid seems to have successfully brought about this reclamation."² He further says, " There can hardly be any doubt that the call of the Mujaddid to all Muslims and Islamic mystics is Away from Plotiness and his host, and back to Muhammad."³

1. The Muslim Community of Indo-Pak, Sub-continent, Delhi (Reprint), 1985, pp.174-75.

2. Faruqi, p.187.

3. Ibid.

CHAPTER-VI

REACTION TO AKBAR'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIMENTS

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As mentioned earlier Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi stayed for a long time at the royal court of Akbar in Agra. He personally observed the whole political, social, cultural and religious atmosphere and even came into contact with many eminent ulama, sufis, scholars and nobles as well as government officials in order to study their attitude - both thinking and activities, towards Islam, its Prophet, Revealed Book and the followers. Though it is unknown whether he ever met Emperor Akbar, sources say he was fully acquainted with the circumstances of the time and specially the situation in the royal circle. Born in the first decade of Akbar's reign, Shaikh Ahmad was forty three at the time of Akbar's death in 1014 A.H./1605 A.D. Hence the last twenty five years of his whole period of administration were completely in the eyes of the saint. All the contemporary and later works - including his own maktubat and other treatises - reveal him a great opponent and severe critic of the policies and attitude Akbar adopted for Islam and Muslims. But before studying the Shaikh's reaction to Akbar's religious thought and activities, it is better and necessary first of all to bring to light the Emperor's religious experiments.

Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar, who ruled over India for about a half century, (1556-1605), played most important

part in consolidating the Mughal empire in the subcontinent. In the words of Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi, "He built up, from extremely shaky foundations, a mighty and splendourous empire.¹ All the contemporary sources, whether produced in India or the works of foreign travellers, are unanimous in their assessment of Akbar as possessed of a powerful personality, magnetic and inspiring.² His period is credited with political stability peace, harmony and economic prosperity. However, we are informed of great concern and distress, on the issue of religion and religious activities in the Royal Court, among the Muslims of the age. Badayuni throws immense light on Akbar's dislike and hatred of Islam and Muslims. The other historian and the works of contemporary ulama and poets also supply the material in the context. Let us study the process of his religious experiments at the court in a very systematic and chronological framework.³

1. I.H. Quraishi, Akbar, Delhi 19 , p.

2. K.A. Nizami, Akbar and Religion, Delhi 1989, p.1.

3. According to Professor K.A. Nizami Akbar's attitude towards Islam falls into three distinct phases,

First phase . 1556-1574

Second phase 1575-1580

Third phase 1581-1605

He says, "His (Akbar's) attitude towards Islam was of sympathy in the first, of apathy in the second and antipathy in the third". See for details, Akbar and Religion, pp.100, 101.

Akbar, in the early years of his reign, seems a pious, true and devout Muslim, having great love for and extreme devotion to Islam, its Prophet, and Almighty Allah. He offered namaz punctually, observed the fast of Ramazan, paid zakat and fulfilled religious obligations. He took very much interest in religious festivals. He also helped poor and needy persons, distributed alms and charity among them and worked for their welfare and upliftment. He revered ulama, respected sufis and mazhaikhs and regarded religious personalities in high esteem. He also paid visits to the shrines of eminent saints - especially the dargah of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer. His firm belief and religious confidence strengthened in him strong feelings to work in accordance with Islamic laws and customs. Although he married the daughter of Bihari Mal in 1562¹, remitted the pilgrim tax in 1563² and abolished jizya in 1564³, he however, continued to show his deep interest in religious and religious matters and displayed religious reactions of different sorts, specially during his important campaigns.⁴

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1. For details see, Akbar, the Great Mogul, Delhi 1966 (Third India Reprint), pp.42-43.
 2. Ibid., p.47.
 3. Ibid., p.48.
 4. Ibid., pp.50-52, 88-92.

It was his religious stannchness that in 1574 he changed the name of Prayag to Allahabad.¹ Moreover, the dismissal of Bayram Khan which took place in 1560 can also be seen into religions perspective.²

Akbar had deep love and respect for the Prophet of Islam during the early years of his reign. It is reported that when Abu Turab, on his return from Hajj pilgrimage, brought a stone with the impression of the Prophet's foot on it, he (Akbar) went out several miles to receive the relic.³ He also respected the family of the Prophet. when in 1564 one of his wines gave birth to twins, Akbar named them Mirza Hasan and Mirza Husain.⁴

Akbar, in the early years, was so much devoted tot he religion and religious ideology that he was generally

1. Ibid., pp.161-2.

2. Akbar and Religion, p.102.

3. Abdul Qadir Badayuni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, Calcutta, 1869, p.320. Also Nizamuddin Ahmad, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Calcutta 1927, Vol.II, p.528.

4. Abul Fazl, Akbar Nama, Calcutta 1873-87, Vol.II, p.236.

critical of other modes of thought and behaviour. It appears that he strictly followed the Sunni path as there is an example of its that in 1569 Mirza Muqim of Isfahan and Mir Yaqoob of Kashmir were put to death on the recommendation of Shaikh Abdum Nabi and other ulama for certain Shia-Sunni differences.¹

We are also informed of Akbar's extreme religious aptitude, his long and untiring association with religious and spiritual exercises with sincerity and genuine faith. He performed his religious duties meticulously. He himself offered the five time namaz punctually and even exhorted others to offer prayers regularly and in congregation.² Seven imams (leaders of the congregational prayers) were appointed by him for each day of the week. Sometimes he himself called people to for namaz by pronouncing the azan³. Shaikh Farid Bhakkari says that Akbar even cleaned the a mosque with his own hands. In the matter of dress also, he

1. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.124-25.

2. Ibid., p.350.
Also, Akbar and Religion, p.108.

3. Shahnawaz Khan, Maathir-ul-Umara, Vol.II, p.561.
Also; Akbar and Religion, p.108.

adhered to the norms of religion. Farid Bhakkari writes, "The late Majesty (Akbar) used to wear dress according to the practice of the Prophet and used to strive hard in enforcing things permitted and preventing acts forbidden (by the laws of Shariat).¹ Shahnawaz Khan also says the same thing. According to him Akbar in those days strictly followed the Shariat and made all possible efforts for 'amr bil maruf and nehi an' al mukar'.² Badayuni has given the details of his repetition of the names of God though out the nights in meditation. To quote him: "Most of the time he (Akbar) passed in discussion about 'qala Allah', God says, and 'qala Rasul', the Prophet says. He kept himself engaged in spiritual sayings, learned discussions and ascertaining the truths of philosophical and theological problems etc. He passed the whole night in meditation on god, and repeating 'ya Hu' (O He) and 'yaHadi' (O'guide), the names of god, in which he became well-versed. In order to offer his thanfulness for any Divine favours, he (Akbar) used to sit in morning, by way of humility, alone on a black stone in an old room, in the neighbourhood of the royal palace."³

1. Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin, Korach 1961, Vol.I, p.69.

2. Maathir-ul-Umara, Vol.II, p.561.

3. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, pp.200-1.

Interest in religious festivals

Akbar took great interest in religious festivals. Professor Nizami writes, "Whether due to youthful exuberance or in order to study public attachment with saints and shrines. Akbar some times restored to strange tracks. Many people made flags of different colours and carried them, alongwith offerings and presents, to the tomb of Syyid Salar Masu Ghazi at Bahraich. Large contingents went from Agra also and kept vigil for several night preparing for the occasion. Akbar went incognito to see there flag processions. When a person seemed to have recognized him, he immediately rolled his eyes and squinted, rendering recognition impossible".¹

Akbar laid great emphasis on Haji pilgrimage. A large number of Muslims went to ARabia every year on the royal expenses.² Akbar sent gifts to the sharif of Mecca though these pilgrims. A huge amount was every year given to them

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1. Akbar and Religion, p.103.
Also Akbar Nama, Vol.II, p.145.
 2. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, II, p.258.
Also, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Vol.II, p.517.

for the distribution among the needy and poors of Mecca and Madnia. Once a sum of six lakhs of rupees was sent for this purpose.¹ He is also reported to have financed the construction of a Khangah for the stay of pilgrims in Hijaz.² According to Badayuni Akbar had issued a general order to the effect that any one who desired for Hajj, might go to Mecca at the royal expenses.³ The author of Maathir-i-Rahimi informs us that when the Kingdom of Gujarat was entered amongst the added territories, Akbar decided to send a special delegation of pilgrims from India consisting of bright hearted persons of Indian, Central-Asian and Khorasanese origin with ration and other materials, like the caravans of Egypt and Syria, to Hajja pilgrimage through the ports of Gujarat.⁴ It appears that at one stage in 1576 A.D. he himself expressed his wish to performed Hajj. At one time the zeal of the Emperor reached such a level that he stripped himself, donned the pilgrim's garment (ihram) and uttering the words 'Allahuma labbaikh, Allahuma

1. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.246.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.239.

4. Abdul Baqi Nahavandi, Maathir-i-Rahimi, Vol.I, (Baptist Mission Press), 1924, p.835.

labbaik' (My God I am present, My God I am present) went on for some distance to see the pilgrims.¹ Such rights moved the spectators and convinced them of his deeply religious sentiments. He had appointed 'Mir-i-Hajj' to look after the needs of the pilgrims Khwaja Yahya, a descendant of Khwaja Obaidullah Abrar, Sultan Khwaja, son of Khwaja Khwand Mahmud, and Abu Turab acted as the leaders of the Hajja pilgrims and defrayed the expenses of the party on different occasions.²

Akbar held ulama, the religious scholars, and mashaikh, the sufi-saints, in high esteem. Encouraged by his excessive interest in traditional religion, the section of the conservative ulama made a bid for controlling his religious behaviour and consolidating their position at the court. He appointed Shaikh their position at the court. He appointed Shaikh Abdun Nabi as his 'Sadr-us-Sudur', and in course of time he developed great respect for him. Akbar was so deeply attracted towards the Shaikh that he often visited his -----

1. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.200-1.

2. Ibid., pp.151, 246, 320.

Also, Akbar Nama, Vol.III, pp.382-83.

Also, Akbar and Religion, p.110.

Also The Religious Policy of Akbar, p.16,

residence to attend his discourses on hadith, the traditions and fiqh, the Islamic jurisprudence. Sometimes he also did not hesitate in putting the Shaikh's shoes in order to pay his extreme regards to him.¹ One one occasion he sent to him through Abdul-Qadir Badayuni costly and beautiful Nakhudi Shawals, prepared in the royal workshop, with a message, "These shawls are from our own private treasury and we had them prepared for you, do use them".² As Sadr-us-Sudur Abdun Nabi enjoyed wide powers with reference to the grant of 'madad-i-maash' land. Akbar added more powers and enhanced his status and position.³ He also sent Prince Saleem to the

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.204.

2. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.237, 243-44.

3. It may be mentioned that Abdun Nabi's attitude towards Akbar also became over bearing. Once, some suffron water was sprinkled on the clothes of Akbar on the occasion of his birth day. The Shaikh objected to this and in great anger threw his rod towards Akbar. It fell near him and broke into pieces. Angrily he enquired from the Emperor as to why he had put on the dress of 'ahl-i-bid'at', (people who indulge in innovation. Akbar was exasperated but he controlled himself. He expressed his distress and agony to his mother who pacified him by her remark that the incident really enhanced his dignity since it was in the enforcement of Shariat principles that the Shaikh had acted in that way and that God would reward for his (Akbar's) patience, See Zakhirat-ul-Khwanin, Vol.I, pp.69-70.

Shaikh's house to study the Chehl Hadith of Maulana Abdur Rahman Jani.¹

Similarly, Abdullah Sultanpuri, the other distinguished alim of the period, also succeeded in getting close to Akbar. Jealous of Abdur Nabi's influence he developed acrimonious attitude towards him. He was known as "Shaikh-ul-Islam and 'Makhdum-ul-Mulk".²

Besides, Akbar also highly regarded the mashaikh of his period. During early years of his reign Akbar's faith in sufis and saints was beyond the measure. During his conflict with Hence he approached Shaikh Jalaluddin Thanesari and sought his blessings.³ On another occasion he paid another visit to the Shaikh.⁴ Likewise, a large jagir was granted to Syed Muhammad Ghanth of Gwalior, the famous sufi of the Shattari silsilah, and, after his death, he continued to pay reverence to his son Shaikh Ziaullah.⁵ When Prince

1. Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.204.

2. Akbar and Religion, p.115.

3. Ahmad Yadgar, Tazkira-i-Humayun wa Akbar, pp.356-57.

4. Akbar Nama, Vol.III, p.341.

5. Mumtakhab-ul-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.202.

Saleem started his education, Akbar held a huge ceremony and invited Maulana Mir Kalan Harawi to bless the prince.¹ He also had firm faith in and highly regarded Shaikh Saleem Chishti, through whose blessings he was rewarded with the birth of Prince Salem. He is reported to have set his wife, (Prince Saleem's mother), to the saint's house in order to obtain his spiritual favour.² Moreover, Prince Murad was also born at the Shaikh residence.³

As the Shaikh was ninety five years old in those days. Akbar punctually went to his Khangah. he was concerned of his old age and deteriorating health.

Akbar is also reported to have approached and obtained blessings from Shaikh Burhan, Sahikh Nizammuddin of Narnaul,

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1. Ibid., p.170.

2. Ibid., pp.108-9. In this context Badayuni says, "As the Emperor has some issues who died early, and in this year one of the respected ladies became pregnant he sought the help of the Shaikh ul-Islam Chishti, a resident of Sikri, and sent his lady in the sacred precinct of the Shaikh. The Shaikh had, before this, given the good news of the auspicious birth of the Prince and the King, delighted with this good news, used to visit the Shaikh after every few days and was awaiting the fulfilment of the promise. For these mutual interviews, he built a big edifice on the top of the hill of Sikri, near the monastery of the Shaikh.

3. Ibid., p.123.

Shah Abdul Ghafoor of Azampur, Miyan Abdullah of Badayuni and Shaikh Nizamuddin of Ambethi.¹

Both Abul Fazl and Badayuni inform of Akbar's faithful attitude towards Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer. He went there first of all in 1562 in order to pray for the birth of a male child. Badayuni say, "On the 8th Jamada I, 969, (14th January 1562), he went on a pilgrimage to the holy tomb of the pillar of Shaikhs and saints, Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (may God sanctify his secretly), and bestowed gifts and bounties on assiduous in prayers."² Subsequently, he undertook several journeys to Ajmer. His second visit to the shrine of great chishti saint is reported to have been paid in 1568, after his victory of Chittor.³ This time he went on foot to the shrine of the Khwaja.⁴ The third visit of Emperor Akbar, to Ajmer, was paid in 1570, after the birth of Prince Saleem, in order to pay homage to the great saint.⁵ At this time he ordered the construction of

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1. Akbar and Religion, pp.111-12.
 2. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.49.
 3. Akbar Nama, Vol.II, p.324.
 4. Akbar the Great Mogul, p.69.
 5. Akbar Nama, Vol.II, p.350.

buildings at Ajmer and Nagaur. He also arranged for the management of the dargah and provided funds for the care and comfort of the visitors.¹

Akbar also visited the tombs of the mashaikh of Delhi and pleased the saints and the poor by his gifts of dirhams and dinars.² In 1564 he visited the shrine of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. Once on his way back from the dargah he had to face an attempt on his life. It is his love for the muslim saints that he attributed his providential escape to the spiritual help of the Shaikh and other saints of Delhi.³ He also went to Hansi and visited the tomb of Shaikh Jamaluddin, and distributed charity.⁴ He went to see the dargah of Shaikh Fareeduddin Ganj-i-Shakar at Pakpatan, in

1. Ibid., pp.350-51.

Abdul Baqi Nahavandi has given a detailed account of this journey of Akbar. He says that Akbar went on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (may God sanctify his secrets). His Majesty engaged himself in the fulfilment of the vows, started from Agra on Friday 12th Shaban, 977 (20th January 1570), for Ajmer where he performed all the conditions of pilgrimage and rules of circumambulation and bestowed presents on the saints and poors. See Maathir-i-Rahimi, Vol.I, p.768.

2. Ibid., pp.857-61.

3. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.60.

4. Maathir-i-Rahimi, Vol.I, pp.857-61.

Punjab, were, throughout his stay, he performed prayers and spiritual exercises.¹ There he also kept himself engaged in the company of saints and men of God.² In 1574 he sent Mir Ghiyathuddin and Naqib Khan to the shrine of Shaikh Sharafuddin Yahya at Maner, alongwith a large sum of money, in order to ask for inspiration.³

Change in attitude and construction of the Ibadat Khana

Now we find a change in Akbar's religious outlook. We also observe a state of enquiry and skepticism in him. Contrary to his interest and attraction the religion; its followers and obligations, during the early years for understanding the principles of Islam and the ultimate Reality as well. He also seems to passionately interested in the mystery of the relations between God and man, and in all the deep questions concerned with that relation. With he returned home after gaining a long succession of remarkable and decisive victories which left him without an important enemy, he issued orders for the erection of a building at Fatehpur Sikri entitled 'Ibadat Khana' the House of worship.

1. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.124.
2. Nahavandi, op.cit., Vol.I, 857-61.
3. Akbar Nama, Vol.III, p.94.

the chief object of Akbar in raising this religious hall was to provide facilities to the selected persons representing the various schools of muslim theological and philosophical learnings to provide for his heart yearning for truth. Initially he invited four classes of Muslims, viz. ulama or the doctors of islamic jurisprudence and laws; mashaikh or the Muslim saints; Syeds or the descendants of the Prophet of Islam; and umara or important and selected nobles of the royal court. Giving a detailed account of this Hall of worship, Mulla Abdul Baqi Nihavandi, the author of Maathir-i-Rahimi, says, "As from the beginning of his youth fortune avoured him (Akbar), through the guidance of the auspicious fortune. His Majesty, the Caliph of God, had an inclination for the company of the masters of learning and perfections and the association of the men of sufi traits. he always paid respect to this honoured class of people and admitted them in his heavenly assembly and paradise-like hall. By listening to the intricacies of the sciences, ancient and modern, he acquired a perfect store of knowledge of the history of the ancient religious and the narration of the former peoples and course accounts of the stages of the world. And through the great interest he took in this group of people at the time of his return from the auspicious

journey to Ajmer, in the month of Zi-Qaida 982 (Feb. 1575) corresponding to the 20th year of the Ilahi Era, he issued this high command that skilled masops and thoughtful builders should build a house and a home for the sufis in the neighbourhood of the lofty palace; and that none except the group of Syeds of high status and the barred and the Shaikhs should lie there. The expert engineers in accordance with the world - abiding order, laid foundation of a building comprising of four wings. And on the completion of that auspicious edifice His Majesty the Emperor (to whom the sky was a slave) spent his honours on Friday nights and other holy nights in that holy building and the house of love, in the company of the people of Happiness till the down of the great lamp, ie. sin. He had fixed the following arrangement: in the West, the Syeds should sit; in south the ulama and the wise men; in the north mashaikh and men of spiritual attainment should without any difference; and umara or nobles, who had connections with masters of learning and men of sufi traits, should sit in the east. His Majesty bestowed his bounties on the people of all the favour groups. He selected from amongst the members of the assembly a number of people so that they may bring to the notice of the King deserving people who may be present within the precincts of the Ibadat

Khana. And with his ocean - bestowing hand he used to give to every one handfulls of asharifis and rupees. And to those who by ill luck were kept away from the receipt of His Majesty's bounty, having gathered them on Friday morning in the enclosure before the Ibadat Khana, in a line, he used to give handfulls of gold; and if by chance some uneasiness came to His Majesty's nature, he appointed one of the servants of the court he trusted for great kindness and compassion.¹"

So far as the proceedings of the House of Worship, Ibadat Khana, are concerned, Abdul Qadir Badayuni sheds a flood of light on what happened there. He says, "After performing his Friday prayers he (Akbar) used to come out from the new monastery (Khanqah) of the Shaikh-ul-Islam and arranged for an assembly in that house of worship wherein no other than mashaikh of the time and ulama and learned scholars, with a few of the favourites and courtiers were allowed admission. All sorts of instructive and useful discussions were held. One day Jalal Khan Qurchi, who was my patron and through whose influence I entered the services in the midst of the conversation, said that he had gone to Agra

1. Maathir-i-Rahimi, Vol.I, pp.833-35.

to see Shaikh Ziaullah, son of Shaikh Muhammad Ghaith. The latter, he said, was so much hard up that one day in the assembly having taken some quantity of pulse, he took a part for himself and gave a part to me and the part he sent for his family. On hearing this news His Majesty was affected, and listening to his words, he called for Shaikh Ziaullah and fixed a place for him in the Ibadat Khana. Every Friday night he called for the groups of Syeds, mashaikh, ulama and umara, and when he found some unusual behaviour from these groups he laid down that nobles should sit in the east wing, the syeds in the west, the ulama in the south, and mashaikh in the north. He himself came to them and held discussion, ascertained the truth of his questions and employed all sorts of pleasant arguments. Countless gold was given to the deserving ones through the favourites in proportion to their deservings. His Majesty himself distributed among the ulama and the learned scholars many useful books which were entered in the general treasury from Itamad Khan Gujrati during the conquest of Gujrat. Of the several books given to me was the one called Anwar-ul-Mishkat".¹

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, pp.201-4.

Thus we see that the meetings of the Ibadat Khana continued, in the beginning, very quietly and with full discipline. It also created in Emperor a love of Islam and Muslims. But very soon, in the subsequent years, it lost its influence and played a significant role in Akbar's religious deterioration. In the near future the house of worship (Ibadat Khan) became a centre great differences amongst the and other groups. Ill-feelings arose among themselves even about the seats and the order of precedence. When the discussions started, it was discovered that ulama, as mentioned earlier, divided in groups and even individually against each other. They differed not only on common issues but on fundamentals as well and showed intolerance for each other's views. All these circumstances led emperor Akbar to great anxiety and disappointment.

Stormy discussions in the Ibadat Khana led Akbar to great discussions in the Ibadat Khana led Akbar to great disappointment and unpleasantness. Instead of bring credit, its proceedings brought frustration discredited to him. Hence, he thought of stepping in as one invested. As public interest in religion was necessary in order to qualify for

the investment of that authority, he, therefore, arranged Mitad (anniversary of the Prophet of Islam) celebration on a big circle. Nizamuddin Ahmad says that hardly there was anybody in the city who did not enjoy feast that day.¹

He took one step further. In June 1579 he decided to read the Khutba, congregational address, in the mosque and lead the Friday prayer. Justifying this step of Akbar, Abdul Fazl says, "As at this time it came to his hearing that the guiding Imams and legitimate Caliphs did not leave worship to others, but look this weighty matter on their own shoulders, he (Akbar) resolved to initiate them in this."² One Friday he displaced the regular preacher (Khatib) of the chief mosque at Fatchpur Sikri, he, mounting the pulpit (mimbar) of the mosque, himself began to recite the following verses composed by Faizi, "In the name of God, who gave us sovereignty, who gave us a wise heart and a strong arm, who guided us in equity and justice, who removed all

1. Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Vol.II, p.343.

2. Akbar Nama, Vol.III, p.396.

N.B. - Nizamuddin Ahmad make it more specific by saying that Akbar wanted to emulate the traditions of the Pious Caliphs, the Abbasids and the Timurides, particularly Timur and Ulugh Beg. See, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Vol.II, pp.344-5.

else from our thought justice, His praise is beyond the range of our thought. Exalted be His Majesty, great in the Lord."

It is reported that the situation was so serious that Akbar had hardly recited these verses that he began to stammer and tremble. He stopped and suddenly came down from the puppet only after reciting the Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Qur'an, and few verses of the holy scripture, and offered the Friday prayer.¹

Furthermore, Akbar felt confident to proceed with the idea suggested by Shaikh Mubarak some five years back, i.e. to claim himself a most superior religions as well as spiritual leader of the Muslims of India. In the other words he now decided to assume to himself all authority, temporal and spiritual. Accordingly was drawn up by shaikh Mubarak in the form of a Mubzar as "most just, most wise, and most

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1. It may be mentioned here that Abul Fazl himself has pointed out the public reaction to this action of Akbar. He says that his (Akbar's) recitation of the khutba gave lever to commotion and disturbance in the people. See Akbar Nama, Vol.III, p.397.

Professor Nizami is rightly of the view that obviously it was due to strong public feelings against Akbar's religious ideas that such a situation developed. See, Akbar and Religion, p.127.

learned". The document is reported to have been issued on behalf of eminent ulama of the Mughal court. According to Badayuni, "After great circumspection and deep thinking on the intricacies of the meaning of the holy verse. Obey god and obey the Prophet and those who have authority among you, and the true tradition (Hadith) surely the man who is dearest to go on the Day of Judgement is the Imam-i-Adil; whosoever rebels against him rebels against me, Akbar ruled that the position of the Just Ruler in the eyes of God is superior to that of the Mujtahid, the interpreter of the Divine Laws, the Shariat.

"And His Majesty, the Sultan of Islam, the Protector of men, the Amir of the Faithful, Abdul Fath Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar Badhshah, the warrior, is the most just, the most wise and the most God-fearing. therefore, if in the problem of religion concerning which there are different concerning which there are different opinions among the mujtahids, he by his sound thinking and clear meditation, takes side with one of the quarreling parties, in order to facilitate the living of human beings, and welfare of the world order, and issues an order, all must follow it; and similarly if he issues an order just thinking, which in no way conflicts with the text of the Quran and which tends to

the betterment of the people of the world, it is incumbent upon all the act upon it and opposition to it will draw upon its perpetrator the damnation of the next world and religious and wordly grief. This truthful document is drawn up for the glory of God and the propagation of the rights of Islam, in the presence of the doctors of religion, the ulama, and learned theologians, and took place in the month of Rajab 987 A.H./ August 1579."¹ Even according to Badayuni the text of the document runs as, "Whereas India has now become the centre of security and peace, and the land of justice and beneficance, a large number of people, especially learned men and lawyers have immigrated and chosen this country for their home.

"Now we, the principal ulama, who are not only well-versed in the several departments of the laws and in the principles of jurisprudence, and well acquainted with the edicts which rest on reason and testimony, but are also known for piety and honest intention, have duly considered the deep meaning, first, of the verse of the Quran, 'Obey God, and obey the Prophet, and those who have authority among you, and secondly, of the genuine tradition, 'Surely

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, pp.271-72.

the man who is dearest to god on the Day of judgement is the Imanm-i-Adil; whosoever obeys the Amir, obeys me; and whosoever rebels against him, rebels against me. And thirdly of several other proof based on reasoning or testimony. We have agreed that the rank of Sultan-i-Adil is higher in the eyes of God than the rank of a mujtahid.

?Further, we declare that the king of Islam. Amir of the Faithful, Shadow of God in the world, Abdul Fath Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar Padshah Ghazi is a most just, amost wise, and a most god-feasing king.

"Should, therefore, in future, a religious question come up regarding which these opinions of the mujtahids are variance, and His Magesty, in his penetrating understanding and clear wisom be inclined to adopt, for the benefit of the nation and as a political expediendt, any of the conflicting opinions which exist on that point, and should issue a decree to that effect - we do hereby agree that such a decree shall be binding on us and on the whole nation.

"Further, we declare that should His Majesty think fit to issue a new order, we and the nation shall likewise be bound by it; Provided always, that such order be not only in accordance with some verse of the Quran, but also real

benefit to the nation; and further, that any position on the part of his subjects to such an order passed by His Majesty shall involve damnation in the world to come and loss of property and religious privileges in this.

"This document has been written with honest intentions, for the glory of God and the propagation of Islam, and is signed by us, the principal ulama and lawyers, in the rajab in the year 987 A.H.".¹

It is stated that those who signed the mahzar were Makhdum-ul-Abdullah Sultanpuri, Sadr-us-Sudur Shaikh Abdur Nabi, Ghazi Khan Badkhshani, Hakim-ul-Mulk, Qazi Jalaluddin Muttani; Badr-i-Jahan Mufti, and Shaikh Mubarak himself.² But here it is remarkable that in accordance with Badayuni's statement all these ulama except Shaikh Mubarak subscribed to the document against their will and, that too, not without a long discussion.³ Thus the mahzar assured to Akbar the utmost power that any man could claim to exercise with the limits of Islam. Though it seems to have been issued for the propagation of Islam, to recognize the authority not

1. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.279.

2. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.260.

3. Ibid., p.272.

only of Quran but of the genuine traditions of the Prophet of Islam as well, yet also according to Badayuni, it established the superiority of the intellect of the Iman-i-Adil, the title proclaimed for Akbar, and rendered any type of opposition impossible. An Islam was considered secondary.¹ He (Akbar) only wanted to possess the power of ignoring all legal rulings if they inhibited him from acting in accordance with his wayward desires to injure the orthodox ulama and the position of orthodox Islam itself."²

Complete Change in religious outlook:

Now there starts third phase in Akbar's religious attitude. During this period he adopted an attitude of distrust and hatred towards the conservative section of the ulama whom he had pampered in the first and tolerated in the second phase of his career. He gave up prayers enjoined by the Shariat, spoke with scant respect about the companions of the holy Prophet, became critical of Islamic thinkers like Razi and 'Ghazzali', and abjured his relations with the mystic centres. He criticised not only the orthodoxy but the principles of Islamic faith also. he now started working for

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.272.

2. Akbar, p.154.

his own supremacy in religious matters.¹ According to Badayuni the road to ijtihad (interpretation) was opened for him and it was established that the Imam (the Emperor) possessed superior wisdom. No obstacle was left in his way. The difference between things, lawful and unlawful, was abolished. The superiority of wisdom of the Imam prevailed over the Shariat. He now called Islam as blind acceptance of traditions.²

Akbar gradually became estranged from Islam and Muslims. By 1580 he had definitely moved away from the old moorings of his thought. According to Abul Fazl he joined the stammering tongues of the bigots of the age.³ He gave up visiting the shrines of Muslim saints. He sent Murad to Ajmer, in 1580 to represent saints. He sent Murad to Ajmer in 1580 to represent saints. He sent Murad to Ajmer in 1580 to represent saints. He sent Murad to Ajmer in 1580 to represent saints. "As he was himself on way to becoming a religious leader," says Professor Nizami, "It was not below

1. Akbar and Religion, p.131.

2. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.272.

3. Ain-i-Akbari (English translation), p.163.

his dignity to accept anybody a superior to himself."¹ He felt that his association with and presence of the scholars of other religions might produce some sobering influence. He, therefore, came into contact with and opened the door of the Ibadat Khana to Christians, Hindus, Jains and Parsees etc. In the words of Abul Fazl, "The Emperor's court became the home of the inquiries of the seven climes (haft aqleem), and the assemblage of the wise of every religion and sect."²

With the admission of scholars of other faiths the earlier atmosphere of recrimination and tension in the 'Ibadat Khana' disappeared. Abul Fazl says that sufi, philosopher, orator, jurist, Sunni, Shia, Brahman, Jati, Siura, Carbak, Nazarena, Jew Sabi (Sabian), Zoroastrain, and others enjoyed exquisite pleasure by holding the calmness of the assembly, the sitting of the world-lord in the lofty pulpit.³ Now Akbar made an attempt to bring about a synthesis of various religions. In 1582 formal debates on religion were stopped and a new religion styled as the Tauhid Ilahi or Din-i-Ilahi was promulgated. In 1584 the

1. Akbar and Religion, p.130.

2. Akbar Nama, Vol.III, p.366.

3. Ibid., p.365.

Italu Era was introduced. In 1592 millennial coins were issues Professor Nizami rightly says, "Both ideologically and structurally the process of drifting away from the central traditions of Islam was completed."¹ The new faith was based upon the principles of universal toleration, Sulh-i-kul. Many important Hindu, Jain, Parsee and Christian doctrines found a prominent place in it. There were the important rites and rituals of the new faith:

1. Its followers had to exchange greetings with the words Allah-o-Akbar and Jalla Jalaluh, and
2. The members were enjoined to distribute during their life time the food that is usually distributed after death to bless the soul of the departed;

1. Akbar and Religion., p.132.

Commenting upon this new religion of Akbar, Professor K.A. Nizami further says, "The Din-i-Ilahi had no metaphysical or even ethical foundations. No religious philosophy sustained it and higher moral or spiritual values buttressed its ethical position. It was a haphazard agglomeration of certain rituals, whimsically visualized and pompously demonstrated. Von Noer totally demolishes its foundations as a creed when he observes, 'The Din-i-Ilahi' had an importance of pre-eminent practical value; it was a political fraternity the members of which had bound themselves by oath to stand by the emperor in good all ill-fortunes, in joy and in trouble'. The use of religious medium for the realization of political objectives had an inherent danger of weakening, in the long run, the base of secular institutions." (See, Akbar and Religion, p.133).

3. Birth day parties were to be arranged compulsorily by the members.

4. During birth days meat could neither be seen nor eaten.

5. Vessels of butchers, fishers and birth catchers could not be used.

6. Cohabitation with old, pregnant or barren women and with girls under age of puberty was forbidden.¹

Disciples were initiated into the fold of new religion on Sunday because on that day the world illuminating sun in its highest splendour. These disciples were required to sacrifice their property life, honour and religion for the founder of the faith, i.e. Akbar.² As a symbol of initiation of shast was given to the new entrant.³ Every new member of Din-i-Ilahi, if he was a Muslim, had to adjure his faith in traditional (taglidi) and metaphorical (majazi) Islam.⁴

1. Akbar and Religion, p.135.

2. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.304.

3. Shast is supposed to be the sacred thread that Zoroastrians and Hindus tie round their waist and round their neck. It is also known as zunnar.

4. It may be borne in mind that by demanding severance from ancestral and traditional faith in Islam, one more dimension was added to the situation: real Islam was one as interpreted by Akbar and that all other interpretation and approaches were wrong and needed to be discarded.

The phrase Allah-o-Akbar, which means 'God is Great' and is frequently repeated in the prayers, was interpreted by the followers of Din-i-Ilahi as 'Akbar is God'. According to Professor Nizami, "Being the form of salutation of the followers of Din-i-Ilahi and the opening line of all works writtens under court patronage, it came to be looked upon as a subtle way to bruit about Akbar's claim to divinity."¹ Akbar used the phrase on the coins, the imperial seals, the royal farmans and in all official correspondence.²

The Sijda or prostration is looked upon by Muslims as the exclusive right of God. But in Akbar's court it became part of religious devotion. They (the disciples) took upon a prostration before His Majesty as a prostration performed before God: for loyalty is an emblem of the power of God. Akbar invented Sijda for him and called it 'zamin bos' (kissing the ground), and looking on the reverence due to a king as an absolute religious command. He called the face of the king 'kaba-i-Muradat' (sanctum of desires), and 'Qibla-

1. Akbar and Religion, p.136.

2. The Mughal farman, and even nishans continued to bear the inscription 'Allah-O-Akbar' till the early years of Shahjahan's reign. Later he substituted the phrase by 'Bismillah ar-Rahman ar Rahim', means 'In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful',

i-Hajat (goal of necessities).¹ Though being informed of the public opposition and criticism Akbar had issued orders of exemption and made prostration voluntary, he was annoyed if anybody disregarded it.²

The situation did not stop here. Akbar and his associates went to great extent in demolishing in cultural structure of Islamic ideology and practices. He did not want any limitation. All the restrictions, which Islam places on autocratic power, were removed by making it subservient to law. The main obstacle in his way was the class of ulama who had not at all been impressed by the proclamation of the malizar. Even both Makhdum-ul-Mulk and Abdun Nabi seem to have had qualms of conscience at having fixed their seal to such a false and mischievous document as the mahzar. Their approval to it, though unheartily, had made them so disgraced that they retired from public life in their houses and mosques. They are reported to have told every one that their signatures had been obtained under duress and that its

1. Mumtakhah-ul-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.259.

2. Ibid.

contents were illegal.¹ Consequently, on hearing their activities, Akbar, early in 1580, decided to banish both of them to Mecca. It appears that so much discontent had spread among the ulama that the continued presence of the two divines was considered dangerous. It is to be mentioned here that they were not silent even in Mecca and Madina about what was happening in India. According to Muhammad Husain Azad, both Makhdum-ul-Mulk and Sadr-us-Sudur acquainted the scholars (ulama) of Arabia with Akbar's aberrations. The reports reached Akbar who was further enraged.² On hearing the news of rebellion in Bengal and the march of Mirza Muhammad Hakim against Akbar, in 1581, the two divines returned to India. But Akbar treated them with great severity as he did not like their coming back because of their unhidden hostility towards him. Makhdum-ul-Mulk was poisoned.³ His dead body was taken very secretly to Sultanpur, his home town and buried there. Akbar did not stop here... All the property of Makhdum-ul-Mulk was confiscated and his sons were repeatedly tortured.

1. Maathir-ul-Umara, Vol.II, p.563.
2. Muhammad Husain Azad, Darbar-i-Akbari, Lahore 1898, p.327.
3. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.311.

According to Badayuni his family was reduced to such penury that they did not have a cat's meal to satisfy their hunger.¹ Similarly, Shaikh Abdun Nabi was also dealt with extreme cruelty. He went to the capital and had a private audience with Akbar. It is reported that the Shaikh spoke harshly to the Emperor who was so enraged that he gave his face a hard blow with his fist. Then he handed over Abdun Nabi to Todar Mal. The latter's hostility clearly reveals from Abdul Fazl's remarks when he condemns Todar Mal for his religious intolerance.² Abdun Nabi was further humiliated and imprisoned. One night a group of men murdered him in the imprisonment and, according to Badayuni, his body was thrown in the square of minarets where it lay for several hours.³

Akbar's hostility towards ulama and Islam did not stop here. He went further. Assassinations of Makhdum-ul-Mulk and Sadr-us-Sudur paved the way for future activities. I.H. Quraishi say; "The banishment of these two theologians in 1580 was, in fact, the beginning of a large scale presecution of orthodox ulama who were not willing to toe -----"

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.311.
2. Akbar Nama, Volume III, p.223.
3. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.311-12.

the official line."¹ Many prominent ulama were victimized by suspending all grants of five hundred bighas or more.² All the qazis, appointed before the time of Sultan Khwaja, who was an active member of Din-i-Ilahi, were dismissed.³ The department of Sadr lost its significance. The lands earmarked for grants ran waste.⁴ Many ulama were banished from their houses and sent into exile either to Mecca or to distant places.⁵ Several leading scholars were secretly put to death.⁶

Akbar went further in his persecution of Islam. His hostility towards Islam and Muslim increased suddenly. It appears that his association with Rajput families and the views expressed by his Hindu wives had great impression upon him. They created a desire in him to find out the comparative merits of Islamic and Hindu ideas. Badayuni inform us that many madaris, (Muslim religious schools), and

1. Akbar, p.161.

2. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, p.278.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.343.

5. Ibid., pp.274, 277.

6. Ibid., p.277.

masajid, (mosques), were obliterated and a large number of religious minded Muslims left their native places.¹ Akbar drove away many Shaikh and Fakirs out of Qandahar and exchanged them for horses.²

Wine was allowed. Badayuni says, "For those addicted to it (wine) a wine shop was opened at court under the supervision of a lady, the wife of the gate-keeper who is descended from the line of drunkards, and a fixed price was settled so that any one desiring wine for illness, may dictate his name together with father's and grandfather's to the clerk and then may take it. People under this pretence gave false names and took it. And the wine-shop was opened for drunkards."³

Similarly even according to Badayuni the public prayers (namaz-i-ba'jamat) and the azan, call for the prayer, which were said five times in the court were abolished.⁴

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II, pp.274-75.

2. Ibid., p.299.

3. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.314.

4. Ibid.

Not only this, the names like Ahmad, Muhammad, Mustafa and others like these, in order to please the infidels outside and their daughters inside the haram were disliked. In course of time, the names of some of the favourites who bore such names, were changed. For example the names like yar muhammad and Muhammad Khan were uttered and written as Rahmat.¹

Another anti-Islamic thing, which was introduced, was that the dead body should be buried with head eastwards and feet to the west. Akbar himself used to go to bed in this manner.² Commenting upon it Vincent Smith rightly says that, "This rule appears to have been prescribed for general compliance. It had the double purpose of honouring the rising sun and offering and insult to Muhammadans who turn towards Mecca which lies westward from India".³

1. Badayuni, op.cit., Vol.II, p.314.
2. Ibid.
3. Akbar the Great Moghul., p.158.

Besides, the tradition of having beard was very badly treated and many distinguished persons in the Mughal court very proudly shaved their beards. Badayuni says, "He (Akbar) exhorted people to shave off their beards, and this custom became current, and those who shaved their beards brought fourth the argument that beard takes its nourishment from testicles. Previously the pious persons considered the keeping of beard as a sort of religious duty now that duty lies in shaving it off and not in keeping it."¹

Further more, the ordinance of washing the whole body after ceremonial uncleanness was put off absolutely. They argued that the essence of humanity is the drop of semen which is the root of the good and the pious; and what it means to say that there is no need of bath after an emission of human excrement and the emission of this tender thing (drop of semen) wants no bath. The proper thing is that they should first take bath and then co-habit.²

1. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.11, p.303.

2. The Religious Policy of Akbar, p.24.

Akbar also made it obligatory to use gold and silk dresses at prayer time.¹ Namaz, rauza (the fast of Ramazan) and Haji were abolished long before this.² The reading and knowing of Arabic language was discouraged. The tafseer (exegesis of Quran), tradition, jurisprudence and their reading became hateful and rejected. The sciences like astrology, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, poetry, history and short stories became current and necessary.³

The Emperor and his disciple ridiculed Islamic doctrines. Badayuni says that Akbar, in this way, cast doubts and laughed at every precept of religion and every principle of Islam whether basic or secondary like prophethood, scholastic theology (Kalam), vision of God (royat), impositions (takleef), creations (takween) and resurrection (hashh-wa-nashr) etc. If any one gave an answer he was prohibited from doing so. All took part in this discussion, rather a meeting for arrogance and defamation.

1. The Religious Policy of Akbar, p.24.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

The heretics (din faroshan) brought as present, exploded errors from every quarter. For pampering the Emperor. Here is an instance when Akbar ridiculed islamic beliefs in open which touched the hearts of pious Muslims. One night, addressing Birbal, Akbar said, "How can reason accept this fact that a person with that weighty body can go towards heaven from his bed in one minute and exchange ninety thousand words with Almighty God and his bed still remains warm by the time he returns, and people believe this." They also considered as fake the integrity of the Quran and the verbal authority of the same, as also such matters as the perpetuity of the soul after the dissolution of the body, and rewards and punishments, except by way of transmigration, and they gave weight to such phrases as, "Truly the Quran remained in the hands of a few useless ones. Grave speaks not to anyone; none speaks after the secrets of the Quran. Festival has come and things will improve - like the face of the bride."¹

Akbar and his followers still did not stop their anti-Islamic activities. They did every thing and even went out

1. The Religious Policy of Akbar., p.27.

of range in the opposition of Islam and Muslims. They were not satisfied with only claiming the dignities and status of Imam-i-Adil and 'mujtahid' for Akbar. Now they declared Akbar a prophet. Contemporary literature contains innumerable instances of poets, scholars and courtiers trying to invest Akbar with prophetic and even divine attributes.¹ It appears that Akbar liked and appreciated this idea and did not stop people from such attempts.² According to Abul Fazl he used to say that in India no one had ever set himself up as a prophet because the pretensions to divinity had suppressed it.³

No doubt, Abdul FAzl, who had greatest insight in the mind of Akbar, prepared ground for his prophethood and invested him at every turn of his life with some attributes of the prophets. Moreover, other poets and writers, especially among the royal circle, also followed the tone

1. Akbar and Religion, p.186.

2. Ibid., Vol.III, p.397.

3. Ain-i-Akbari, Vol.II, p.224.
Also, Akbar and Religion, p.186.

set by Abul Fazl. Not only this, they ascribed divine attributes also to him. Now Akbar was not the 'shadow of god' but 'God in human form'.¹

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4. Professor Nizami has given various poetic verses of Kahi, Faizi and Rahai who represented three different backgrounds and enjoyed great pleasure at the Mughal court. These verses clearly reveal Akbar as a prophet and God in human form. For details see, Akbar and Religion, pp.187-9.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's reaction:

This was the religious condition of Akbar's reign, especially at his royal court. Though many ulama, sufis and scholars flourished there and even enjoyed Akbar's closeness and intimacy, none of them is reported to have openly come in his opposition. But, on the contrary, various sections of Muslim society outside the court reacted against his religious experiment and ideology. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi deserves special mention in this regard. Sources say that he was dissatisfied with the then religious condition. The circumstances led him to great anxiety and distress. Therefore, his reaction to Akbar's thought and activities was most powerful, and he openly criticised his attitude towards Islam and Muslims.

As mentioned earlier, Shaikh Ahmad, on the completion of his education, proceeded to Agra, the then royal capital, and stayed there for several years in order to observe the religious environment at the Mughal court. Due to his deep understanding and insight into religious learnings - both rational and traditional - and spiritual disposition he soon became popular amongst the ulama, sufis and scholars of the city. The nobles and grandees of the mughal empire were also attracted towards him. We don't have any information whether

or not he ever came into contact with Akbar. However, his works - rasail (treatises & brochurs), and maktubat (epistles) - reveal clearly that he was fully aware of the personal religious outlook of the Emperor. His long stay at the Mughal Capital, association with the top officials and contact with the ulama and intellectual class had provided Shaikh Ahmad with an opportunity to deeply understand the socio-religious condition of the time. All his writings and other sources - contemporary and later - as well as modern works contain material in this regard, and present him as a critical and severe opponent of Akbar's religious experiment and ideology.

Shaikh Ahmad observed that many important personalities and even the Emperor himself were impressed by the Greek philosophers and thinkers, and convinced by their thought and arguments. He witnessed that they denied the prophecy of the Prophet of Islam and raised objections in this context. Sirhindi found Akbar and his loyalists to be renouncing Wahi (Divine revelation upon prophets), and discarding mojizat (prophetic miracles). Shaikh Ahmad studied the wicked ideas and came across impious views of these people of the royal circle. He also came to know that Abul Fazl and others tried to invest prophecy to Akbar by calling him God's prophet.

Having observed the Hindu dominance at the important offices, Shaikh Ahmad also seriously noticed the increasing influence of a particular (Muslim) sect, (Shias), and found its followers openly preaching their religious ideas, criticising the Prophet's wife, Aisha, his companions and the first three pious Caliphs at the royal court.

Born and brought up in an orthodox family of Sirhind Ahmad was well-versed in Islamic sciences, and fully knew the rules and regulations which Islam recommends to run a state. His attachment to the religion, love and respect for the Prophet of Islam, his family, descendants, companions and the Pious Caliphs could not be questioned. As such it was, therefore, impossible for him to keep silence at this critical juncture. How could he have tolerated the anti-Islamic ideology, laws against the commandments of Shariat, or sayings and activities dishonouring the most distinguished personality of the holy Prophet.

Analysing the situation, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi felt that the kings, the ulama and sufis were equally responsible for creating this. He looked upon the rulers as 'all soul' and the people as 'all body'. According to him if the soul

goes wrong, the body is bound to go astray. The Shaikh declared, "The Kings being on the right path means that the world is on the right path; his waywardness is waywardness of the whole world."¹ He, therefore, tackled the situation in a fundamental way by openly criticising Akbar's misguided religious experiments and even his attempt to assume religious leadership. He also felt that Akbar had violated the basic value system of Islam and his experiments had damaged and diluted the monotheistic character of Islamic teachings. He was of the view that the realm of religion should remain beyond the imperial jurisdiction.²

So far as ulama and sufis were concerned, Shaikh Ahmad also attacked these sections of the Muslim society with full seriousness. He thought that Akbar's religious experiments were also fed by the mystic ideology of Wahdat-ul-Wujud which, when indiscriminately applied to situation, weakened the distinctive features of faiths and created an atmosphere

1. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol. I, Letter No. 47.

2. Ibid.

of moral holiday.¹ He, therefore, enunciated a counter theory known as Wahdat-ul-Shuhud and defined the mystic concepts pertaining to hal, (state), and maqamat, (stations), in the light of Quran and Sunnah. He also criticised the role of ulama, especially 'ulama-i-su' whom he considered responsible for the then religious condition, and felt that the Muslim society of his day was sunk in bid'at. He was of the opinion that no progress, individual or collective, was possible without closely following the path indicated by the Prophet.² Though he supported qiyas, (personal judgement in matter relating to religions problem), and ijtihad (interpretation of Islamic laws), but he was opposed to introducing heresies under the garb of fresh interpretation. Within the framework of the Quran and the Sunnah Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was prepared to give any amount of liberty, but outside it non. Profssor Nizami says that he believed that mystic faith in pantheistic philosophy, negligence of Shariat law by the ulama, and emphasis on the interiorization of religious rites to the exclusion of formal adherence to law had weakened the

1. Akbar and Religion, p.262.

2. Ibid., p.263.

moral fibre of the community and debilitated the structure of fath.¹ The Shaikh, therefore, came forward and decided to banish from the royal circle all activities and ideologies which Islam forbade. His reaction to Akbar's religious experiments resulted step by step, and at every moment he did not deviated from the Quran and Hadiþ.

Discussion with Faizi and Abul Fazl:

Shaikh Ahmad, therefore, came forward and initiatly held discussion with the eminent persons who apart from holding the key position in the government, claimed themselves well-versed in rational sciences. The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, as mentioned earlier, tells us that the Shaikh used to visit Abul Fazl Faizi and other scholarly nobles and discussed with them many important themes of the Quran, Hadiþ, philosophy, jurisprudence and sufism etc.² The saint himself says that he held polemics with those who had gone astray as far as their beliefs and religious ideas were concerned, and tried to bring them back to the path of the Quran and the Sunnah.³

1. Akbar and Religion, p.264.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.131.

3. Ithbat-un-Nubuwwat, Karachi, 1963, pp.8-9

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1. Akbar and Religion, p.264.

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3. Ithbat-un-Nubuwwat, Karachi, 1963, pp.8-9

Compilation of Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat:

Afterwards, still at Agra, he wrote an Arabic treatise Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat,¹ which, according to Friedmann, gives arguments to necessity of prophecy in general and the Prophecy of the Prophet of Islam in particular.² The opening part, preface, of the brochure throws light on the circumstances which led Ahmad Sirhindi to its compilation. It also discusses the religious condition of Akbar's court and throws light on his and his nobles beliefs, Sirhindi say, "I observed the defects and the weaknesses in the beliefs of some of the people of the time regarding the prophethood, especially of the Prophet of Islam; and I found, with certainty and evidence, a particular person (Akbar) to be claiming himself a prophet; and I came across the changes and irregularities in his conduct about the prescribed condition of prophethood; and I saw these things, with certain facts, to be infiltrating amongst the common people. A large number of ulama our time were tortured on account of their firm belief in the stead fast

1. See supra p. (Chapter II, P.16)
2. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, p.5.

prophets (mursalin) and the strict following of the Shariat. Many of them were executed and murdered. The situation was so worst that it was given up in the royal society to openly speak (tasreeh) the name of the Prophet of Islam, the last of the chain of the prophets. And those, whose names were as Muhammad and Ahmad, changed their names. The cow slaughtering, which had been one of the important symbols of the practices of Islam in India, was declared prohibited. The mosques and the tombs of the Muslims were ruined and demolished. The places of worship of the infidels were paid great reverence and their important festivals were celebrated with full honour and respect.

"In short, the symbols and customs of Islam were declared false and useless; and the rites and rituals of the infidels and their (false) religions were publicly introduced. The rules and regulations of the infidels of India (Hindus) were brought to light, and translated, from their own languages, into Persian so that all the impressions of Islam in India could be destroyed. I realized that the illness of doubt and denial is widespread, and even those, who could be expected to make reforms, indulged in such maladies. The people came near to destruction.

"I made inquiries of the individual's beliefs, looked into their doubts and misapprehension (about Islam and Islamic laws), and examined their feelings as well as secret notions. I discovered that their deviation from Islam and its beliefs is due to long distance from the time of the Holy Prophet, their keen interest in philosophy and the studies of the works of the Indian (non-Muslim) scholars.

"I, therefore, engaged me in polemics with some of those people who claimed themselves to be wellversed in philosophy and the works of the infidels and were misleading innocent Musalmans. I came across the result that they had gone astray on account of their misbeliefs in the Quranic concept of prophethood and their hypothesis of the prophecy of a particular person (Akbar). They had gone to the extent of believing that only wisdom and sagacity were the main objects of prophethood. According to them a prophet's advent does not mean any other thing than to reform the outward condition of the people, provide the freedom of desires and the lust, and keep them away from the mutual differences. They also used to say that prophecy had no concern with the 'Ultimate salvation (najat-i-Ukhravi) but it is an output of

such merits and virtues of the civilized moral (tahzeeb-i-Ikhlāq) and sincere acts (a'mal-i-Qalbi) as the philosophers had described and discussed it in their works. Sometimes, they quote Ghazzali and say that he too, like other philosophers, has divided his 'Ihya'-ul-Ulum-id-Din into four parts and given preference to the moral acts rather than the prayers like namaz and the fast of Ramazan. They maintain that the physical prayers are of no use to get salvation, and, accordingly, a prophet's mission and teachings cannot be enforced upon and practiced by the person born after a long duration of his (the prophets) time".¹

This was the condition which prevailed at the Mughal Court at that time. Continuing the discussion Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi now presents his own arguments. He says, "According to Divine Mysteries and Favours (Hikmat-i-Azaliya and Inayat-i-Ilahiyay)', the perfection of human soul and treatment of the inward diseases of individuals are the main purposes of the advent of and the task to be fulfilled by a prophet. In order to carry on his prophetic mission

1. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat, (Edited and translated in Urdu, with the Arabic text, by Ghulam Mustafa Khan), Karachi, 1383 A.H. (1963 A.D.), pp.5-7.

successfully, a prophet has to necessarily warn his enemies and announce good news (of the hereafter) to his followers and believers. He has also to inform human beings of their ultimate rewards and punishment. As the desires and the wordly things easily surmount and attract human being, he is very much supposed to committ sins and the worthless acts. If the human soul is perfect, it leads him to the happiness and salvation in this world as well as in the world hereafter. That is why a prophets mission is to invite human being to the 'Eternal Happiness' and the 'Ultimate Salvation' because the wordly fortunes are less and worst".¹

Now Sirhindi refutes the philosophers' views and condemns their works. He is of the opinion that the philosophers, especially those of Greece, with a view to introduce their absurd thought and false ideas in the human world, have amalgated with them (their views) the learnings and the sciences of different prophets and their companions. So far as the area of these prophetic learnings and science is concerned, they include the 'Description of the Refined Manners (bayan-i-tahzeeb-i-Ikhlaq)' and the

1. Ithabat-un-Nabuwwat, p.7.

'Good Esoteric Deeds etc.' They popularized these disciplines as their own inventions.¹

Prolonging his discussion Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi now turns his attention to Akbar and his supporters', especially Abul Fazl's view that 'on account of a long distance of time from the Prophet of Islam's period nobody can be satisfied in maintaining his faith in hi (the Prophet of Islam). Commenting upon this view, the Shaikh questions as to how they came to know about 'Galen' and 'Sobayah' as eminent physician and Arabic graminarian respectively whereas they have not seen these scholars due to a long distance of time between themselves and those learned men. According to Sirhindi if they (Akbar and his supporters) respond that they have studied the learned works of those thinkers and found out their views as well as their description as physician and grammerian in other books of these disciplines, he (Sirhindi) too would advise these people to deeply consider the Quranic conception and injunctions and the traditions of the Holy Prophet, so that they may adequately understand the aims and objects of the

1. Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat, P.7.

Prophethood. If they do so, they will surely come to the conclusion that the Prophet of Islam is the most superior amongst all the prophets; and the distance of time is not at all an obstacle in this way as it is in case of Galen and Sabiyah. Shaikh Ahmad argues, "As all the sayings and the actions of the Prophet of Islam informs us that the perfection of human soul, both in doctrinal as well as practical spheres, takes place through the good actions and the correct faith and removes the diseases and the darkness of the heart, it is, therefore, obvious that the prophethood is exactly but according to his (Prophet of Islam's) sayings."¹

In the concluding remarks of the 'preface the' Shaikh says that when he observed and analysed the religious condition at the Mughal Court, he thought it necessary to write this treatise, the Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat, which comprises an introduction and two chapters. All the arguments in it are based on the Quranic verses, the Prophet's traditions and the works of eminent Muslim divines.² Really the attribution of prophecy to Emperor Akbar or any other person

1. Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat, pp.8-9.

2. Ibid., p.9.

was an act of great anxiety for the Muslims in India in those days. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi stood up in time and, despite great difficulties, took steps in this regard. All his arguments have been represented with authentic and reasonable evidences. If he had not realized his duties as an ardent Muslim divine, of course, the history of Islam in India would have taken an entirely different shape. Shaikh Muhammad Ikram says that the Ithbut-un-Nabuwat is a highly advanced analysis of an important aspect of Islam and Muslims. Sirhindi's argumentations not only convince Musalmans but, to great extent, are incontrovertible and significant for non-Muslims as well.¹

Radd-i-Rawafiz: As mentioned earlier, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also observed the Shia Muslims and found them to be rapidly influencing the Mughal Court and attracting eminent personalities to their own sect. He considered their increasing domination, over the royal circle, a greater danger to Sunnis and their sect. Shias, at the royal court, openly criticised Sunnis and passed strictures upon the Prophet's companions.² In the meantime when Abdullah Khan

1. Shaikh Muhammad Ikram, Rud-i-Kausar (Reprint), Delhi 1987, p.231.

2. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Radd-i-Rawafiz, pp.8-9.

Uzbek, the ruler of Central Asia, captured Mashhad in Iran, there arose severe differences amongst the Sunni and Shia ulama. The latter produced a brochure against Sunnis and their religion. It is said that Abdullah Khan Uzbek had ordered to burn it publicly after cutting out from it the verses of the holy Quran. Later on, the brochure was brought to India and introduced to Akbar's court by some Shia students. They circulated and propagated it among the nobles and the Emperor.¹ In those very days Ahmad Sirhindi also received a copy of it. After studying it he wrote another treatise, Radd-i-Rawafiz, by refuting the Shia sect and its religious doctrines. The author of Zubdat-ul-Maqamat also says that the Radd-i-Rawafiz was written when Shias held positions in the Mughal court and the capital, and were very much closed to Akbar. The latter had great enmity with Islam and its followers. Nevertheless, the Shaikh did not care any thing on account of his attachment to Islam.² Describing the circumstances which led him to the compilation of the brochure, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi says that to all intents and purposes

1. Radd-i-Rawafiz, p.7.

2. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.131.

the treatise of the Shia ulama condemned the first three Pious Caliphs as infidels and reproached and slandered Aisha. Its contents were a matter of great pride to the assembly of nobles and princess. The Shaikh adds that he would refute these Shias in the gatherings he attended. Furthermore, he straight way took to writing a treatise for the benefit of all class of people and named it Radd-i-Rawafiz.

The treatise starts with a very brief description of the advent and development of Islam in India. According to Shaikh Ahmad it was the main cause of the rapid spread of Islam in this country was that almost all Muslims strictly and staunchly followed the Sunni path and believed in Hanafite school of Islamic jurisprudence.¹ Afterwards, the Shaikh turns to the arrival of Shias in India and says, "During the reign of Abdullah Khan Uzbek many powerful Shias, who had created disturbances in Iran and Khurasan, were punished to death. Many of them migrated to India and made contacts with the rulers and nobles by leading them into error."² Then Sirhindi says that the shias consider -----

1. Radd-i-Rawafiz, p.6.

2. Ibid., p.7.

Ali, the fourth Pious Caliph, the righteous Imam after the Holy Prophet Islam. They believe that the Imamat is confined to Ali and his descendants only. If any other person claims to hold this religious position, he does so because of his own tyranny of Ali and his descendants or on account of their pious fraud, tagaiyyah.¹ Now Shaikh Ahmad throws light on the twenty two obscure Shia sects, describes their beliefs, ideology and mutual differences. According to him their internecine war was the principal source of their destruction.² The transmigration of soul which was a taboo with Muslims was commonly held by these Shia sects.³

Referring to the polemics surrounding the statement that the orders and actions of the Holy Prophet enjoyed the status of Divine Revelation, the Shaikh Pleaded that it was not true without qualifications. The tafsir-i-Baizawi has made the point clear. Had all the words of the Prophet enjoyed the status of Divine Revelation, Allah would not have from time to time, warned him to correct himself. In

1. Radd-i-Rawafiz, p.8.

2. Ibid., p.9.

3. Ibid., p.19.

rational matters and on problem of ijtihad, the Prophet's companions were entitled to differ from him. The Prophet of Islam himself did not pay much attention to the rational matters. The suggestion of Umar, the second Pious Caliph, regarding the action against the prisoners of Badr was endorsed by the Divine Revelation. Consequently the Prophet's order to bring the paper or to march under the command of Usama or to expel Marwan from Madina were not identical to Divine Revelation but were based on his own opinion and ijtihad.¹

Referring to the Shia allegations regarding the unreliability of the Sunni ahadith, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi says that the Shias dispute the correct Sunni ahadith without any reason and distort them. They even mutilate the Quran and accuse the third Pious Caliph, Usman, of excluding the Quranic verses that enlogised the Ahl-i-Bait, the family of the Prophet of Islam, and permitted the concoction of evidence in support of their statements. Consequently their works were garbled like the book of Moses and the Christian gospels. Their allegations against Sunni

1. Radd-i-Rawafiz, pp.40-50.

works were designed to defend their own inventions and fabrications. Although the Sunni ahadith enlogising the companions of the Prophet were literally ahad, the innumerable repetitions have bestowed on them the position of mutawatir. Referring to the end of the Caliphs the Shaikh wrote that the ahadith enlogising them guaranteed their glorious end. So far as annoying Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, was concerned Ali also sometimes annoyed Fatima. The Prophet intended to discourage people from annoying Fatima for their selfish ends. She was annoyed with abu Bakr because of the adverse judgement delivered by him against Fatima's claim of Fadak, a garden near Madina which the Holy Prophet had left in his inheritance. Nevertheless, it was based on the Prophet's hadith. She was annoyed because of human passions. Referring to Joseph's compinion in prison, the Shaikh wrote that two idolaters embraced Islam because of the blessings of Joseph's company. The impact of the Prophet's company on the first three Pious Caliphs was far reaching and the same was confirmed by the Quranic verses. The Shi'i ~~plan~~ ^{claim} that the paucity of followers and the fear of distruction of righteous people prevented Ali from fighting for his right is a clear proof of Ali's bay'at with Abu Bakr. As pointed out by the ulama of Transoxiana Ali's

bay'at with Abu Bakr justified the latter's Caliphate. Since the Shias were unable to defend Ali's bayat with Abu Bakr they invented that story that Ali reluctantly made bayat or some of them think that Ali performed laqiyya. Although Mu'awiya was exceedingly powerful Ali fought against him for his right. Neither did he nor did Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, however, take the same step against Abu Bakr.

Although some Sunni ulama did not consider the Shias as infidels, the Shias are infidels because they cursed Aisha and accused her of violating the following verse of the Quran



"And stay in your houses. Bedizen not yourselves with the bedizenment of the Time of Ignorance". (The Holy Quran, XXXIII, 33)/ The command in the above verse, according to Shaikh Ahmad, is not universal. The exceptions were made even in the Prophet's time when some of his wives accompanied him to his travels. Aisha's war against Ali was designed to meet certain useful ends. Since she was endowed with the power of ijtihad, her judgement to fight against Ali could not be questioned. The Shaikh quoted the traditions from the Sunni authorities to show that the Prophet had forewarned Ali of the emergence of sect known as

Rawafiz who would exaggerate his (Ali's) achievements and revile his (the prophet's) companions. God and angels would be of no avail to them. those who bore malice towards the first two caliph or annoyed them equally bore malice against him (the Prophet). As the Shias annoyed him (the Prophet),, the annoyed God. The opinion of the Sunni scholars, who do not consider Shias as infedels, should be glossed over. At last Ahmad Sirhindi urged the Muslims to leave the disputes that took place between the Prophet's companions to God and remember them respectfully. According to him, it was non of the business of Muslims to interfere with the dispute of the Prophet's companions.¹

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's reaction against Akbar's religious experiments did not stop here. After joining the Naqshbandi silsilah and receiving the khilafat drom Khwaja Baqi Billah, especially after the latter's death in 1012 A.H./1603, as his chief successor, Shaikh Ahmad had acquired great fame and important place amongst the religious circle of northern India. The Khwaja himself, in his life time, had placed him on the highest position amongst his own disciples. As mentioned earlier, Sirhindi had already come,

1. Radd-i-Rawafiz, pp.56-73.

during the long stay at Agra in his youth, into contact with many important nobles of Akbar's court. The joining of the Khwaja's discipline gave new energy and direction to his acquaintance with those officials as they held Baqi Billah in high esteem, visited him frequently and obtained his spiritual blessings. They had helped the saint immensely in consolidating his position in Delhi. If on one hand, these nobles, having right perspective of and proper place for Islam, the Prophet of Islam and the Shariat in their minds and hearts, had not yet accepted and even been influenced by Akbar's innovations, on the other, they still had strong position in the court and the Emperor himself regarded them very much. Despite having complete authority in various sufi order, the Shaikh, at that time, did not lead a quiet and passive life. In this connection he followed his spiritual ancestor Khwaja Obaidullah Ahrar and more willingly decided to continue his efforts against the heretical trends of the royal society. The Shaikh, realizing the situation, did not let the opportunity slip. He, therefore, tried to preach the teachings of Islam systematically through the nobles and grandees of the Imperial court as he considered them the best way of persuading the Emperor to Islam and its laws. He started correspondence with them by recalling what had been

forgotten and bringing home the significance of the Shariat to them. The first volume of his maktubat contains some letters, addressed to important nobles, which seem to have been written in the reign of emperor Akbar. Initially these letters were sent to Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, Qulich Khan, Khwaja Jahan and Murtuza Khan (Shaikh Faqid Bukhari). These letters bemoan the sad state into which Islam had fallen in India during the reign of Akbar and remind the nobles of their religious duties. These also throw valuable light on Shariat and its implementation on human society. In the words of Shaikh Ikram, "The rhetoric and appeal of these letters kindled a religious fervor which, although it took some time to bear fruit, profoundly affected the history of Islam in India by strengthening the position of the orthodox in place of power."¹ It should not be presumed by going through these epistles that Sirhindi had no intention to persuade the Monarch. As just told, he was of the opinion that if those nobles became perfect Muslims both in beliefs and practices, they could easily advocate the cause of Islam before the Emperor and influence his deeds and thoughts. And, of course, influenced by Shaikh Ahmad

1. S.M. Ikram, Muslim Civilization in India, New York/London, p.160.

Sirhindi's thought, these nobles exerted great influence upon Akbar and even pressurized him to turn to Islam. "No serious student of history," says Professor, Nizami, "Can evade the conclusion that in the later years of Akbar's reign, under the influence of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, a definite ideological cleavage had developed between Akbar and his nobles."¹

1. State and Culture in Medieval India, P. 166.

(This conclusion is supported by Jahangir himself who remarks that during his princehood before and during the illness of his father, the opinion of nobles and courtiers had changed).

CHAPTER-VII

RELATION WITH JAHANGIR AND THE MUGHAL NOBLES

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The question of making contacts with the rulers and officials or participation in the politics has been controversial among the different sufi-silsilahs. However, some of them, since the foundation of Muslim rule in India, not only made contacts with the contemporary rulers and the nobles but also participated in the contemporary politics. The Naqshbandi silsilah is the first to have played an important part in the political awakening of the Muslims in medieval India.¹ Professor Nizami says, "The Naqshbandi silsilah alone considered it not only permissible but imperative to establish contact with the rulers, and to attempt to influence their thought and policies."² Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi; therefore, could not keep himself aloof from the affairs of the state in his life-time. He had deep interest and even deeply involved himself in the contemporary Mughal politics. He considered politics, in the

1. For details, see, K.A. Nizami, State and Culture in Medieval India, Delhi, 1985, pp.158-163.

2. Ibid, p.158.

light of Quran and sunnah, inseparable from the religion;¹ and like his central Asian Naqshbandi predecessors, particularly Khwaja Obaidullah Ahrar,² the Shaikh was of the opinion that the ruler in relation to his subjects is like the heart in relation to the body; if the heart is healthy, the body is healthy, and if the heart is sick, the body too is sick. Similarly 'the rectitude of the people depends upon the rectitude of the ruler; and his corruption amounts to the corruption of the people.'³

The main political role of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi lies in his persuading eminent nobles and grandees of the Mughal empire to make efforts for the cause of Islam in India sub-continent. He turned to those personalities in order to bring about a change in the atmosphere and continued his correspondence with them even after the accession of Jahangir by exhorting them to stop religious vagaries and experiments at the royal court which was the real centre of

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1. For the details of Islamic conception of politics, see, Al-Ghazali, Inya-ul Uloom-id-Din, Cairo, 1939, Vol. II, pp.140-54, (Englihs translation by Fazlul Kareem, Delhi, 1982, p.....).
 2. For the religio-political ideology of Khwaja Obaidullah Abrar, see, Rashahat-i-Ain-ul-Hayat, pp.208-9.
 3. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.I, Letters, 47, 67.

such activities.¹ According to Shaikh Ahmad the main responsibility of the nobles (Umara) lied in advising the Emperor to strictly follow the laws of Islam. He called this duty of the nobles 'jihad-i-qauli' or oral war, and considered it the greatest jihad (holy war) of his days.² In fact, he used these nobles as his main instrument in

1. Professor Mujeeb criticises Shaikh Ahmad's manner in which he exhorted the Mughal nobles for the implementation of Shariat laws. In this connection his views are entirely wonderful. He is of the opinion that Shaikh Ahmad's appeal to these nobles reduced the importance of the Shariat. He says, "Shaikh Ahmad's attitude towards the court and the courtiers was typically orthodox. He believed that the power of the state was essential for the maintenance of the Shariah, and urged its use for that purpose. He had no personal motives, perhaps, other than the desire for recognition, but his letters to the nobility do not show any of that dignity of spirit which distinguished the independent ulama. It was necessary, no doubt, to use certain forms of address, and to praise noblemen at the right time and for the right things. But quite often his praise borders on flattery, and one has the feeling that the convessing he did for the Shariah reduced it to the level of a mundane interest". (See, The Indian Muslims, London 1969, p.247). But this not correct. Shaikh Ahmad did not want any recognition or fame either as alim or as a sufi. It is also baseless to say that his attitude towards the nobles shows flattery. His letters clearly reveal his sympathy and sincerity in his mission. He was not a time server, as Prof. Mujeeb thinks, but a sincere follower of Islam. He knew that if he did not come forward and took the pain over the crisis, which Islam and Muslims were facing in those days, the cause of the implementation of the Shariat laws could not be fulfilled. In fact, his letters brought the Mughal nobles near to Islam and, promoted the importance of the Shariat.
2. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.65.

creating Islamic environment at the Mughal court. As discussed earlier, his letters exerted influence on Shaikh Farid Bukhari and others, played an important part in keeping them constant devotees of Islam, and moulded them to restore and protect the Shariat, the laws of Islam.

Shaikh Ahmad's relations with Jahangir appear first of all in his (Prince Saleem's) accession to the throne of the Mughal empire. Professor Nizami maintains that one is constrained to conclude that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and others of his school of thought did play some part in the accession of Jahangir.¹ Actually he activated some Mughal nobles on this occasion. The most important personality behind the event of Jahangir's accession was Saiyid Murtuza Khan, better known as Shaikh Farid Bukhari. It is this very Shaikh Farid to whom a large number of Shaikh Ahmad's maktubat are addressed; and one gets quite a clear impression that the saint looked upon the Shaikh (Farid Bukhari) as an ardent supporter of Islam.² It is alleged that when Saleem

1. State and Culture in Medieval India, p.168.

2. Quraishi, Akbar, p.260.

N.B.: Irfan Habib's objections in this regard are not correct. He doubts the friendship of Shaikh Ahmad and Farid Bukhari, and considers it 'the story advanced in the hagiology of the Shaikh's later disciples and by his modern admirers. Habib has raised certain points in this connection, such as: "Did Shaikh Ahmad enjoy any influence over Shaikh Farid? "Did Shaikh Farid ever take Shaikh Ahmad's advice?"
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finally came away from Allahabad, he was escorted to the

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"There is no proof that Shaikh Farid received Shaikh Ahmad's letter at all, or, at least in the form we have them now" Habib further says that 'It seems very difficult to believe that such a high official of the empire would have dared to entertain letters which spoke in abusive terms of the reigning King's father'. (See "The Political Role of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah", Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Twenty Third (Aligarh) Session, 1960, Part I, Calcutta 1961, pp.212-13).

Professor Habib's opinion is not based upon the detailed and thorough study of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani. He seems to have formed the idea only after easily going through the English translation of few epistles. The complete analysis of the Shaikhs Ahmad's letters, and even the letters of Khwaja Baqi Billah, clearly reveals the freindship and intimacy between Sirhindi and Shaikh Farid. The theme and nature of the maktubat show that Shaikh Ahmad enjoyed full confidence of Shaikh Farid with a considerable influence on him. Many of his letters show that Shaikh Farid, at least sometimes, if not always, took the saints advice for the affairs of state.

So far as the question of receiving the maktubat of Shaikh Ahmad by Shaikh Farid is concerned, these letters themselves provide information in this connection. It clearly appears that Shaikh Farid did receive letters from Shaikh Ahmad and had acknowledged them directly or indirectly. There is no negative evidence to prove that Shaikh Farid did not receive Shaikh Ahmad's letters at all. Various letters of the Shaikh were sent to Shaikh Farid in his reply, especially letters no.44, 45, 47, 48, 52, 54 and 233 of the first volume of the maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani. Rejecting this view of Irfan Habib, Friedmann says, "This view is questionable. Shaykh Farid Bukhari wrote to Sirhindi at least three times and it is clear that the correspondence was not unilateral. That he was not fearful to maintain contact with Sirhindi is clear from his material support for Sirhindi's khanqah. (See, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, p.81, f.n.26).

imperial audience by Shaikh Farid Bukhari. When the nobles were divided on the issue of the succession, it was Murtuza Khan (Shaikh Farid) who rallied the Gaiyid of Baraha to Saleem's support. It should be borne in mind in this connection that before making his accession certain, Saleem was asked to promise that he would protect Islam and revoke any regulation or measure that had been introduced in its contravention. Most of the modern historians accept Shaikh Farid's hand in Jahangir's accession, and even agree with the opinion that he (Shaikh Farid) took a promise from Saleem to defend Islam.¹ However, a critic of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi does not see eye to eye with them. He says that this view seems to have its genesis apparently in the statement of the Jesuits.² But contrary to this view of the Shaikh's critic, the *maktubat-i-Iman-i-Rabbani* show that there had been previous consultations and that mutual understanding had been reached between Ahmad Sirhindi and Shaikh Farid, and also between Shaikh Farid and Prince Saleem. Shaikh Ahmad could not have written to such a high

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1. See for example, Quraishi, *Akbar*, pp.259-60, R.P. Tripathi, *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Allahabad 1985, p.340, Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir*, Allahabad 1962, pp.66-67.
 2. See, *Muslim Revivalist Movement in Northern India*, p.217. (Irfan Habib also thinks in the same way, see, *Proceedings of the IHC*, 1960, p.213).

dignitary of the empire in such a frank mood unless he had found his ideas receptive. It may be noted in this connection that Shaikh Ahmad himself, in his letter, mentions Jahangir as 'Padshah-i-Islam', the king of Islam.¹ This clearly reveals that there had been some expectations among the saint and his followers, from the new king for the implementation of the Shariat laws. Shaikh Ahmad writes, "Today, when the happy news of the rise of the Islamic Kingdom and the accession of the King of Islam reached the ears of every high and low, the followers of Islam considered it obligatory to extend their help and assistance to him, and guide him in promulgating the Shariat, and in strengthening the faith."² This also reveals that Jahangir had certainly promised shaikh Farid Bukhari to protect Islam and patronize its followers as a price for the royal throne. It also appears from this letter that Shaikh Farid conveyed information of political development in the royal court to Shaikh Ahmad. Accordingly, he must have sent the news of Jahangir's accession as well as his promise to support Islam and Muslims to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. The latter's praise of the new king, Jahangir, also supports this view. Otherwise,

1. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.47.

2. Ibid.

Shaikh Ahmad would not have mention Jahangir as the king of Islam and expressed jubilation on his accession to the throne. The letter shows that he was well-informed of the whole circumstances. Moreover, he advised Shaikh Farid and at least on one occasion offers his own services to help and assist Jahangir in the task of the propagation of Islam as well as the implementation of the **Shariat** laws. These things also indicate that Shaikh Farid must have taken a promise from Jahangir, before his accession to the throne, to protect Islam in the Mughal empire.

It is generally stated by some modern scholars that Jahangir never showed any inclination towards orthodoxy.¹ But it is not absolutely correct. There are several evidences, even in his own tuzuk, which reveal his inclination towards the orthodoxy. He had great respect for Islam in his heart.² His firm belief in God appears evidently when he says, "I am hopeful that the whole period of my life will be passed in pleasing God, and even a single

1. See, Muslim Revivalist Movement, pp.219, 222. Rizvi also goes to the extent of saying that Jahangir had never shown any inclination towards the Sunni orthodoxy.
2. Muhammad Miyan, Ulama-i-Hind ka Shandar Mazi, Vol. I, Delhi, 1985, p.91.

movement will not be passed without His remembrance.¹ Whenever Jahangir heard the news of the success of his army in any campaign, he immediately rendered thankfulness to God by making a prostration before Him.² He held polemics with Hindu scholars,³ permitted congregational prayer at the -----

1. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, p.225.
2. Describing an event of such kind Jahangir writes, "When the happy tidings of this great victory was conveyed to this humble servant of God at Agra, he immediately made a prostration as a token of submission to Him, and considered this victory nothing but His grace and mercy". (Tuzuk, 105),
3. During the very first year of his reign he held a polemic with some Hindu scholars and defeated them by teaching them a lesson that how their idols could work as mediation between them and God (see Ibid, p.15).

royal court¹ and even did not like idol-worship.² Moreover, there are many other examples which throw light on Jahangir's inclination towards Islamic orthodoxy.³ He is

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1. Akbar had prohibited the congregation of namaz at the royal court and the prayer mats had been removed. But it was Jahangir who again arranged the prayer carpets, made of the skin of deers hunted in the royal hunting expedition, so that people could offer namaz on them at the royal court. (Tuzuk, p.100).

In this connection Maulana Muhammad Miyan's opinion that Jahangir might have preferred the skin of deers for the purpose of the prayer carpets with the intention to avoid the use of the material purchased and prepared by spending the money obtained through the taxes of non-Islamic nature, seems convincing. (See, Ulama-i-Hind ka Shandar Mazi, Vol. I, p.92.)

2. Once, during his stay at Ajmer, he visited the temple of Rama Shankar. Jahangir found there an idol, made of the black-stone. Its head was like that of a pig, and rest of the body resembled the human body. Jahangir says, "It is the false belief of Hindus that God (may He forbid me), at any time, due to any reason, had appeared in this form. This is because they love and worship it. I ordered to destroy the idol and to throw it in the tank". (Tuzuk, p.125).
3. It was Jahangir who gave up the tradition of tilak, a mark made by Hindus on their foreheads, introduced by Akbar. He not only avoided himself to follow this custom but took steps to get it banished. It is stated that at Govindwal, there was a Hindu priest whose name was Arjun. He had attracted many of his co-religionists to his fold. Even a number of ignorant Muslims are reported to have been faithful to him and visited his house. The priest also attracted Khusro, Jahangir's son, and fixed the mark of tilak on his forehead. On hearing this, Jahangir took prompt action by awarding him sentence and forfeited his whole property. (See, Ulama-i-Hind-ka Shandar Mazi, Vol. I, p.93).

Likewise, describing the events of his fifth regnal year, Jahangir writes in the tuzuk, "It was
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said to have exempted 'Mir Adl' and the 'Qzis' of the empire, only with the intention of the honour of the Shariat, from making prostration before the Emperor.¹ Besides, according to Shaikh Ahmad's maktubat, he (Jahangir) ordained Farid Bukhari to find ulama for his court to advise him in religious matters.² If he had not been inclined towards the orthodoxy, he would not have desired the four

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disclosed to me that Kaukab, son of Qamar Khan, has associated with a Hindu ascetic and consequently his teachings which are completely based on infidelity and heresy, had found favour in the heart of ignorant Kaukab. The latter had also got involved his cousins Abdul Latif and Sharib in those bad activities and wicked ideas. When I came to know this, I summoned them to my presence. After an ordinary threat they both described everything which cannot be mentioned here I thought it necessary to punish them. Hence both Kaukab and Sharib were sent to imprisonment. Abdul Latif was awarded the sentence of hundred lashes before me. This special punishment was only to protect the Shariat, so that ignorant ones do not involve in such things". (Tuzuk, p.83).

1. See Tuzuk, p.100.

2. Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.53. Shaikh Ahmad writes, "I have come to know that the King of Islam, for the sake of his love which he has in his heart for Islam, has asked you (Shaikh Farid) to find out four pious ulama for his royal court to describe and explain the laws of the Shariat so that no non-Islamic injunction can be promulgated. All praises be to God, no other news will be more happy for the Muslims than this one".

ulama to be appointed in his royal court.¹ One can easily reach the conclusion that Jahangir was somehow influenced by Shaikh Ahmad's religio-political thought, if not directly, through the influence of Shaikh Farid Bukhari.² Professor Nizami rightly says that the extent of Shaikh Ahmad's

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1. It is to be borne into mind that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, on hearing this news, advised Shaikh Farid Bukhari to insist Jahangir for appointing only one alim, generally interested in the orthodoxy, for this purpose, rather than four. He thought that the company of such an alim would act as philosopher's stones. Shaikh Ahmad was of the opinion that if four alims were appointed, they would quarrel among themselves; and thus the purpose of implementation of the Shariat would be lost. He wrote to Shaikh Farid that the reign of Akbar was marked by much confusion resulting from the discussing of controversial religious issues. So he apprehended the repetition of the same situation with the possibility of its culminating in ruinous consequences. (See for details, Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.53).
 2. Rizvi once again doubts Shaikh Farid's association with Shaikh Ahmad. Prolonging an unnecessary discussion about Shaikh Farid he says, "Lahore, which was assigned to him in the sixth regnal year, was a strong centre of pantheistic mysticism due to the influence of Miyan Mir and his disciples. With a record of inefficiency to his credit, Shaikh Farid could hardly dare to enforce such 'unwise' steps as Mujaddid advised". (See, Muslim Revivalist Movement, p.228).

This view is not acceptable. Irrespective of Shaikh Farid's political and administrative difficulties, the pantheistic mysticism was not an obstacle, in the task of implementation of the Shariat. The Islamic history gives the names of thousands of the Muslim saint who simultaneously believed in pantheism, Wahdat-ul-Wujud, and strictly followed the laws of Shariat.

influence on Jahangir is a moot point, this much is certain that Jahangir did not pursue Akbar's policy of dabbling in religious matters and making religious experiments.¹

The second phase of Shaikh Ahmad's relations with Jahangir starts with the appointment of his Khalifa, Shaikh Badiuddin's, as his chief envoy in the royal army at the Mughal Capital, Agra, in 1619 A.D. This appointment was made in order to popularise Shaikh Ahmad's message among the soldiers of the army and the common people.² It appears that Badiuddin's presence at Agra brought a positive response for the Shaikh's spiritual mission. Both the sections of the Muslim Society, Civil as well as military, zealously received him and a large multitude joined his mystic fold. But the situation could no longer prevail in his favour. It seems that Badiuddin's increasing popularity in the Mughal army and among the Muslims of Agra became troublesome for the Mughal government because, at least on one occasion, despite the strict instructions of his pir, he had to leave Agra for his home towns, Saharanpur, and return to Sirhind only due to the trouble and difficulties created by some

1. State and Culture in Medieval India, p.171.

2. It may be mentioned here that Shaikh Ahmad might have sent Badiuddin to Agra after fully being aware of Jahangir's inclination towards the orthodoxy. Otherwise, he could not have taken this step.

royal officials who had great enmity with Shaikh Ahmad. It is reported that Baiuddin's departure from Agra, without his **pir's** prior permission, highly displeased Shaikh Ahmad. The author of *Zubdat-ul-Muqamat* say that when Sirhindi sent Badiuddin second time to Agra, he again attracted a large number of the soldiers and officials who learnt from him the Naqshbandi thought and practices. According to Hashim Kishmi they were so closely attached to Shaikh Badiuddin that some of the mischivious people made publicity that he (Badiuddin) was spreading hatred among nd provoking the royal army against Jahangir. The enemies so strongly propagated against Badiuddin that they included Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also in their conspiracy.¹ If the matter is seriously scrutinized, it come to light very clearly that Shaikh Ahmad's intention behind Badiuddin as appointment in the royal army was not at all to launch any revolt against Jahangir. If he would be interested in such activities, he had not missed the opportunity to join the camps of the rebels of Bengal and Bihar, and Mirza Muhammad Hakim, the ruler of Kabul, against Akbar. As a matter of fact, Sirhindi's main objective was to bring the Muslims of all catagories back to the teaching of the Quran and the Holy Prophet.

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.348.

The opponents did not stop here. They adopted and showed an open hostility to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. They poisoned Jahangir's ears that the rising popularity of the saint could lead to political disturbances in the whole Mughal Empire as many of his (Sirhindi's) representatives had been deputed to almost all the important towns and cities. Really this (thing) might have annoyed and stricken Jahangir because as an emperor he could not have tolerated any thing challenging his own sovereignty at any moment. Secondly he was then totally surrounded by Iranese nobles who did not have any soft corner for Shaikh Ahmad because of his severe criticism as well as refutation of their religious beliefs. It is to be borne in mind that all his efforts notwithstanding, Shaikh Ahmad's opponent could not be successful in their false accusation against him. It appears that despite their deep influence over Jahangir, they could not convince him in this direction. Their hypothesis could not linger on. Nevertheless, they continued their cunning and fraud and made another scheme against Shaikh Ahmad by renewing some old grievances. Now they brought to light a later of the Shaikh which he had written to his spiritual mentor, Khwaja Baqi Billah, during his life-time around 1008-9/1601-2, and they taught the Emperor that he (Shaikh Ahmad) had claimed himself to have

transcended the spiritual stage of the first pious Caliph, Abu Bakr Siddiqe. By doing so their intention seems nothing but to play with the religious sentiments of the Emperor and others who, having soft corners for Islam and orthodoxy, according to their (Sirhindi's opponents) wishes, could not have been silent on such a crucial stage. They suggested the Emperor to take immediate action against the Shaikh lest there could not have been agitations among the general masses.¹

Accordingly, Jahangir sent for Sirhindi to his royal court at Agra in order to explain the accusations levelled against him. On reaching the court Shaikh Ahmad, on his appearance before the Emperor, first of all refused to make the customary obeisance, 'Sajda-i-Tazimi' to him, and when urged to observe the usual court etiquette, Sirhind replied, "I have never bowed my head to any of God's creatures and I never will".² The Emperor then ordered for his imprisonment

1. For details, see Hazarat-ul-Quds, Vol. II, p.115.

2. Hazarat-ul-Quds, Vol.II, Lahore 1971, p.115.
The author, Shaikh Badurddin Sirhindi writes, "The Shaikh (Ahmad Sirhindi) was brought to Emperor who asked him that he had come to know that he (Sirhindi) had written that he surpassed the spiritual position of the first pious Caliph. The Shaikh denied it and said that if the Emperor called upon some body near to him in the royal court, and bestowed his favours upon and made negotiations with that person in the presence of eminent nobles and high officials, he (the person called upon) would have to pass through all of the
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in the Gwalior fort.¹ It may be mentioned here that according to Hazarat-ul-Qads. Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) was devoted to the saint since his very young age. Due to the situation in the court and the Emperor's summons to Shaikh Ahmad, he (Shah Jahan) was very much anxious and worried. He sent Maulana Afzal Khan and Mufti Abdur Rahman, both of them eminent alims, to Sirhind to get the Shaikh convinced for performing the customary obeisance to Jahangir. Shah Jahan reported the Shaikh that the prostration before king was lawful in some condition, and if he did so, he (Shah Jahan) assured and guaranteed him full protection. But Shaikh Ahmad responded that Prince Khurram's proposal was an act of departure from the Divine laws

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courtiers in order to reach him (the Emperor). Sirhindi said that this action of that person did not at all mean that he surpassed the ranks and positions of the nobles and official. After receiving the Emperor's favours that person would have to return to his proper place which is lowest of all. Same is the case with me. Whatever I described in the letter, it was just my spiritual journey which lasted for some moment. Then I return to my original place. It is reported that the Shaikh's arguments cooled the Emperor's anger but in the mean time a person, who was not a God-fearing one, told the Emperor that the Shaikh was so proud that he did not prostrate before him who is the shadow of God and His vicegerent. Hearing these words Jahangir turned against and ordered to imprison Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi into the Gwalior fort". (For details see pp.115-16).

1. Ibid, p.116.

(rukhsat); whereas the act of determination (azimat) on the right path was that the prostration should not be offered before any one except God.¹ Consequently he was taken into custody by a Rajpoot officer, Ani Rai Singh Dalan, to be kept imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior in the month of Rabi II 1028/ March 1619 (23/25 Khurdad, the 15th regnal year of Emperor Jahangir).² It appears from the maktubat that the Shaikh's house, sarai, well garden and books had also been confiscated, and his family members were sent elsewhere.³

It is to be pointed out that the letter for which Shaikh Ahmar was accused, had been written seventeen or eighteen years back. Even the first volume of the Maktubat-i-Iman-i-Rabbani, which contain the very letter, had also appeared in 1025 A.H./1616 A.D. The question arises as to why not Emperor Jahangir took any notice of the letter and Shaikh Ahmad's activities till 1619. Before going into

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, p.116.

2. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, pp.272-73.
N.B. - According to Shah Zawwar Husain, it was 4th of Rabi II 1028 when Shaikh Ahmad was sent to imprisonment. See, Hazarat Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Thani, Karachi 1975, p. But Siraj Ahmad says that it was 1st Rajab 1028/4th June 1619. See, Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani ki Dini wa Moashrati Ahmiyat, Karachi, n.d., p.115.

3. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.2.

deep it is better to mention Professor Nizami who too raises a question in this context, which is itself an answer of our query. he says, "Was he (Jahangir) now compelled to take some action against him (Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi) due to changes brought about in the court politics with the advent of Nur-Jahan".¹ If the situation is fully analysed, we shall have to come across the result that Professor Nizami's doubt is genuine. Really there was change in the court politics at that time. Shaikh Farid Bukhari had died and Jahangir's favourite queen was Nur Jahan whose father Itimaduddoula and brother Asif Khan occupied highest ranks in the Empire. It is remarkable that during the life-time of Farid Bukhari no opponent of Ahmad Sirhindi could oppose or make any object against him (Sirhindi). It is only after Shaikh Farid's death in 1025/1616 that the forces belonging to Shi'i sect raised their heads in the royal circle and influenced Jahangir by attracting to their religious ideology. Now turning again to Nizami's doubt about Itimaduddaula's family, we too, have to be convinced of their opposition of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. It is to be kept in mind that the latter, as mentioned earlier in his youth, had severely attacked the Shias on account of their increasing domination and anti-Sunni activities in the

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1. State and Culture in Medieval India, p.169.

Mughal Court. Here, it is necessary to refer to Friedmann who does not agree with Nizami's opinion and contradicts Nur Jahan's hand in Sirhindi's imprisonment by saying that it is not satisfactorily established by sound historical method. Instead, he considers Jahangir's statement about the Shaikh's imprisonment more significant and historically satisfactory. He is also of the view that Nur Jahan's opposition of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is a part of the saint's image developed in Indian Muslim literature.¹ But to make our opinion historically sound we shall have to turn to Dara Shukoh's account of the Shaikh. Dara's position as an important member of the royal family is well established. Born in 1024 A.H./1614 A.D. in the royal fort of Jahangir,² he must have come to know the circumstances which led to Sirhindi's imprisonment. None of his statement in this connection can be denied as saying unsatisfactory. To our complete satisfaction he informs us that whatever had been done to Shaikh Ahmad was due to the calumny and malicious

1. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, p.84.

2. For Dara Shukoh's biographical and other details. See,

misrepresentation of opponents.¹ Certainly these opponents were Nur Jahan, her father Itimadaddaulah, brother Asaf Khan and others of their sect and ideology who occupied the highest ranks in the Mughal Empire in those days. They must have poisoned Jahangir's ears and tried to bring him under their influence, and even compelled him to take some action against Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Professor Nizami, after analysing the whole event, says, "It is difficult to find any consistent application to the religious ideology of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi in the life or thought of Jahangir, probably because there were influences at the court - one of them being Nur Jahan herself - which pulled him in another direction and continued to work against Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and other of his school of thought."²

Shaikh Ahmd continued his correspondence with different persons from the Gwalior fort. The third volume of his maktubat contains several letters, specially in the beginning, which were despatched from his imprisonment. In a letter to his sons, Khwaja Muhammad Saeed and Muhammad

1. Dara Shukoh, Safinat-ul-Auliya, Agra, 1269 A.H., p.197-98.

Dara was twenty five years old when he compiled this work. A person of this age group is fully expected to have collected the material for his book after a complete scrutiny.

2. State and Culture, p.170-71.

Masum, he writes, "you should know the place where you are living nowadays as your homeland. Wherever you live, you should be devoted to God's prayers. The worldly affairs are very easy and simple, you should turn yourselves to the world hereafter. Do console your mother and you should always persuade her to the hereafter. As for our meeting, it depends on Allah's will. If He likes, we will meet surely. Otherwise make submission to and pray Him that we may assemble in the hereafter. We postpone our meeting in this world and think for it in the hereafter, with the Mercy and Grace of Allah Almighty."¹ It appears that the saint's imprisonment caused great anxiety in his followers and supporters. But the Shaikh considered every difficulty in term of mysticism and manifestation of God's awe (jalal) as distinguished from His beauty (jamal). Once he wrote to Mir Muhammad Nu'man, his senior most khalifa, "Untill I was confined to the imprisonment, with the favours of god which appeared as His awe and wrath, I had not crossed the defile of iman-i-Shahudi, the faith of Appearance, and I had not completely come across the world of imagination and retaliation; and I had not fully commenced the journey on

 1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.2

the path of iman biat-ghaile, the faith in Unseen."¹ At the conclusion of the very same letter Sirhindi further writes, "If Allah had not bestowed His Mercy and Favours as well as Rewards upon me , a humble man of broken arms and wings, most probably I would have fell into despair and disappointment, and become hopeless. Praise be to Allah who gave me security from affliction and calamity, and conferred this Rewards and Honour on me in the atmospher of cruety and ruthlessness, and bestowed His grace and Favours upon me in the situation of trouble and sorrow, and guided me to render thanks to Him in both pleasures and troubles, and created me among the followers of prophets and the saints, and the lovers of ulama and pious people. May God confer His blessings and Mercy on prophets and their followers."² Shaikh Badiuddin, whom Sirhindi had earlier deputed in Agra, once wrote to him by communicating his deep concern over the hardship of his pir in the gwalior fort. However, Shaikh Ahmad replied Badiuddin very politely that, "I received your letter through Shaikh Fath'ullah. You have mentioned the cruety and reprehension of some people against me. My friend, be known, it is the beauty of the group of sufis and like the polish for its rust. There, why should it be the

1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.5.

2. Ibid.

reasons of heartbearing, anguish and affliction? when this fagir reached this caravan, it seemed from the very beginning that the illumination (light) of people's accusation were coming, one after another, from cities and villages, as appearing the clouds of Divine light. And they weretaking my spiritual affairs from lowness to elevation. I have been trained fro several years with spiritual beauty (jamal) and now I am journeying through the training of awe and wroth of God. Hence you should have patience and be pleased with every thing, and consider the jamal and jalal as equal."¹

Mir Muhammad Nu'man, the senior most Khalifa of the Shaikh, was also worried and distressed upon the imprisonment of his spiritual preceptor. Though permanently resided at Burhanpur, he himself came to Agra in order to seek the Shaikh's release. However, he (Mir) does not seem to have been allowed to visit the Gwalior fort and see his master there. When, through some sources, Sirhindi came to know of Mir's activities in Agra, he wrote to him, "The reason of your stay at Agra is unknown. Though it (Agra) is near from me (Gwalior), it is useless to stay there while you cannot see me. Please, do not stay there for my sake,

1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.6.

Giving me in the custody of Allah, you move towards your own place (Burhanpur) and continue to please and guide its inhabitants."¹ The Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani reveals that many other followers of the Shaikh were also making efforts to get their master released from the imprisonment in Gwalior fort. In one of his letters (maktubat), also sent to Mir Muhammad Nu'man, Shaikh Ahmad says, "My revered brother Mir Muhamman Nu'man must have come to know that my friends and well-wishers made efforts for my release but they could not be successful. It is better what Allah has done. As a human being I too was distressed and disappointed in the beginning but, in course of time, all my anxieties turned into pleasures and satisfaction, I came to the conclusion that if the aims and objects of my enemies and opponents are in accordance with the will of Almighty God, then my anxieties and displeasures are useless and contrary to my claim of Divine love as the pain in the way of the Beloved's love is equally amiable and beautiful like his favours and grace. Sometimes he (the lover) is rewarded by the Beloved's

1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.12.

It appears from this letter that Mir Muhammad Numan sought the royal permission to visit the Gwalior fort but he was not allowed. His arrival in Agra from Burhanpur is an indication that he had come there for this purpose only. Moreover, the Shaikh's regret over Mir's stay at Agra clearly reveals that he had been prevented to meet his spiritual mentor.

favours and sometimes he has to meet His anger and resentment. But he gets more and more taste in this aspect of his Beloved because there is not all any suspicion of self-desire and pleasure. And when God has resolved to keep somebody in troubles, His decision may be a kind of his graces and Mercies and source a spiritual pleasures. And the purpose of my enemies seems in accordance with the purpose of God and as their purpose is a door of God's purpose, hence I should their purpose approved and elegant and a source of enjoyment. All his actions and movements are apprecable like those of his beloved whose actions and movements are the manifestation of those of his beloved, and every one who performs such acts like those of the beloved, is also loved by the lover. It is surprising that as much as he (the person whose deeds are like those of beloved) show cruelty, he seems beautiful in the eyes of lover as this cruelty seems to be the cruelty of beloved. All their affairs are entirely opposite who tread on this path (the path toward Allah). Hence, it is contrary to the love for beloved to have the feelings of disheartedness and badness for such person because he is nothing but a mirror which reflects the actions of beloved. However, those who are tormenting, seem to be more beautiful than the other people.

"Please ask your friends to remove their greafs and sorrow from their hearts, they should not have any bad thinking for their enemies, but they should take joy in their deeds and actions. As Allah has ordained us to pray Him and seek His favours and He very much likes our invocations, submission and humility, we should, therefore, invoke His blessings for the removal of calamities, and we should seek His shelter and ask for His pardon."¹ In the meantime, when Badruddin Sirhindi, the author of Hazarat-ul-Quds, sought his master's opinion regarding some spiritual and theological problems, especially the relations between human body and the soul, Shaikh Ahmad despatched him a detailed letter which concluded as, "what has happened to you while our separation has not yet completed a year".²

It appears that during the period of imprisonment in Gwaliyar Shaikh Ahmad was harassed also by the fort authorities. And his harrassment must have caused anxiety in his followers. Maulana Muhammad Tahir Badakhshi, also a renowned khalifa of Shaikh Ahmad, seems to have communicated his worries to his pir because, in a letter to the Maulana, Shaikh Ahmad once wrote that he should not be very much

1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letters No.15, 18, 19.

2. Ibid, Letter No.31.

careful of his (Shaikh Ahmadi's) troubles and distress in the imprisonment but he should be quiet and devoted to God. The letter runs, "Don't be worried and distressed upon the news of my disturbance and troubles. It is beautiful and proper what Allah does. Though externally it seems His wrath but in fact it is His Grace and Beauty. Do not take my words insincerely as these are not mere a formality. It is fact what I say..... Derwish Muhammad Ali gave me your letter which is consolatory for me. I came to know what you wrote. I have written my present condition in the reply. All my sons and friends should maintain Unity among themselves and be firm and strict. They should be satisfied with Almighty God."1

Though it is difficult to say whether the efforts of Ahmad Sirhindi's Khalifas and supporters, regarding his release from the imprisonment, brought any positive response but according to contemporary and letter sources, he was released from the Gwalior fort about one year later in 1029/1620.² Jahangir gave him a robe of honour and present

1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.37.

2. It may be noted here that some letter works say that the period of Sirhindi's imprisonment was three years which is incorrect. (See Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgiramī, Sabhat-ul-Marajan fi Asar-i-Hindustan, 1303/1885, p.53/Nawab Siddiqi Hasan Khan, Abjad-ul-Ulum, Bhopal, 1295/1878, p.899/Rehman Ali, Tazkir-i-Ulama-i-Hind, Lucknow 1914, p.12/Khairuddin Zarkali, Al-Alam, Vol.I, Cairo (Egypt), 1954, p.139). Professor Muhammad Aslam

of one thousand rupees. According to the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. Shaikh Ahmad was given the choice of either staying at the royal camp or leaving for home. The Shaikh preferred to live with the Emperor rather than to return to Sirhind.¹

f.note contd. from prev.

says that Sirhindi was in imprisonment for two years (See, Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Lahore, 1973, p.4). It is also incorrect.

It may also be noted that some later and modern works state that Sirhindi did not leave Gwalior fort until Jahangir accept certain conditions, that the 'Sajda-i-tazimi' the prostration before the king, would be abolished; that all the mosques that had been erased should be erected; he cancelled, that Qazis, muftis and censors he appointed to enforce the Islamic code; that Jizya should be re-introduced; that all innovations (bidat) be stopped and the injunctions of the Shariat, the Laws of Islam, he enforced; and all the prisoners, who had been sent to prison in contravention of the above, be released. (See, Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya (Urdu), p.191/B.A. Farugi, The Mujaddid's conceptions of Tawhid, Lahore, 1940, p.26). But all the contemporary sources are silent in this connections because the release from the trouble imprisonment was itself the important the question for him. (See Sirat-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Suni, p.197).

1. Tuzuk-i-Jahangir, p.308.

Jahangir writes in the account of the 15th year of his reign, I summoned Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi who had been in prison for some time on account of boasting, adorning his shop and using immoderate language, and I released him, giving him a robe (khilat) and one thousand rupees, I also authorised him either to go home or to remain with me. He justly told his imprisonment was really valuable and a guidance for him. And he expressed his desire to remain in my service".

N.B. - It may be mentioned that there is difference of opinion among the scholars on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's presence in the royal camp. There is a question among them whether the saint's presence was voluntarily, as Jahangir has said above, or he was forced to remain
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Now begins the third and last phase of Shaikh Ahmad's role in the Mughal politics. Both the contemporary records and the later works say that the Shaikh remained in royal army and accompanied it to various place for four years.

f.note contd. from prev.

with the Emperor. Professor Muhammad Farman and Professor Muhammad Masud Ahmad do not think it voluntary. The former says that it is Jahangir's diplomacy and falsehood when he writes that he gave right to Shaikh Ahmad either to go home or to remain with him. Muhammad Farman say that Jahangir kept the Mujaddid in imprisonment till last moment, (See, Hayat-i-Mujaddid, Lahore, 1970, p.35). Similarly Masud Ahmad says that the Mujaddid's release was not the complete release and freedom but it was kind of restriction and imprisonment, (See, Sirat-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sami, p.198). On one occasion Shaikh Muhammad Ikram, also seems, to be agreed with the above opinions, (See Rud-i-Kausar, p.273). It may also be mentioned here that Khwaja Hashim Kishmi too writes, "Due to interference of the Emperor, he (the Shaikh) had to go to various cities for two three years (See Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.159). The real words of Hashim Kishmi clearly reveal that the Shaikh's presence in the royal camp was not voluntary.

The letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also bring this fact to the light that he had not voluntarily joined the royal camp, but he was forced to do so. In one of his letter he says to his sons Muhammad Saeed and Muhammad Masum, "My sons, be satisfied, people care my difficulties and they are trying for my release from the confinement. They don't as to what beauty is hidden in disappointment, helplessness and failure. Nothing can be equal to this grace that a new life is to be given to me by making me helpless. All my affairs have been given to this helplessness and I have become like the person who seems alive but who has dead." (See Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.83). In another, letter he says, "I consider it a good-fortune to live in royal camp with disappointment and helplessness". (See (Ibid, Letter No.87).

During this period he visited some cities of northern India.¹ Wherever the royal army went and encamped, Shaikh Ahmad went there. It appears that he started his journey from Kashmir as at that time Jahangir was staying there. The author of Majma-ul-Auliya says, "The great Emperor Abul Muzaffar Nurudding Muhammad Jahangir, on his departure from Kashmir, fell seriously ill. Physicians gave medical cure to him but he did not recover. His personal and private servants advised him to turn to pious people. Hence in this connection Shaikh Ahmad was also approached and requested to extend his spiritual blessings for the recovery and good health of the Emperor. The Shaikh, therefore, went himself to Jahangir. The latter invited him to his royal palace and asked for his recovery. It is reported that Shaikh Ahmad before blessing the Emperor, exhorted him to popularize Islam; its teachings and customs. Jahangir is said to have answered the Shaikh, "It is for you to say, and it is for me to do." The Shaikh offered namaz and invoked the blessings. It is said that the Emperor recovered in the same night. When the royal army, alongwith Jahangir and Shaikh Ahmad, reached and encamped at Sirhind, the Emperor desired to have meal at Shaikh Ahmad's house. The later next day

1. Zubdat-ul-Magammat, p.159.

sent some delicious dishes, prepared in his own kitchen, to Emperor Jahangir, through his sons. It is said that after eating the food of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Jahangir told Asaf Khan that all the items of the meal were very tasty; and that he took only half of the meal, the remaining half was with him to have later. Then he asked Asaf Khan to go to Shaikh Ahmad in order to request him for accepting some annual or monthly grant either in cash or in kind for the expenses of the saints and mashaikh of his khanqah. But Shaikh Ahmad did not agree with and said to him that the beggars of God beg only from Him."¹ The above statement reveals clearly that the Shaikh Ahmad, after his release from the imprisonment, came to Sirhind and met his family members. But it appears he could not stay there for long time and he had to join the royal caravan and leave Sirhind, his native place, for another place. He then reached Delhi and afterwards came to Agra and remained there for some time. His presence in the royal camp, if on one hand, compelled him to leave his house, family members and

1. Ali Akbar Husaini Ardistani, Majma-ul-Auliya, (M.S.), I.O.L. No.145, f.442.
N.B. - The Emperor's attitude towards the Shaikh shows that now he had much regard for and faith in him. But it appears that the atmosphere created by his father, Akbar, had made him helpless, and he could not express his open sympathies for Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Most probably the influence of Nur Jahan and Asaf Khan etc. also a factor in this way.

disciples and followers, on the other, it provided him with an opportunity to frequently meet the Emperor himself. He did not miss any chance to persuade Jahangir to Islam and Shariat. once he wrote to his sons, Muhammad Said and Muhammad Ma'sum, "Thanks to God that everything is all right here. We are keeping good companies. By god's grace, I did not lose any single moment without describing theological points and the Islamic principles to him (Jahangir). Every thing which I used to explain in my private gathering, I am describing a them here. If I start to write only about one meeting, it would require a whole volume especially the conversation of this night, the 17th of Ramazan. Many points like the creation of prophets, the unstability of reason, the faith in hereafter, the reward and the punishment, the Divine Appearance, the seal of the Prophecy of last of the Prophet, the mujaddid of every century, the following of the Pious Caliphs, the lawfulness of tarawih, the falseness of transmigration and the jinns and their affairs were discussed. The Emperor listen to me with full attention. In this connection agatab, Abdal, Autad and their affairs were also explained. Thanks to God that the Emperor completely participated in the discussion. There was no alteration in him. May be there is hidden some type of welfare in these talks. I am thankful t God who guided me to do so. If he had

not directed me, I would not have found this way. Undoubtedly our Holy Prophet came with Truth in this world." The letter apparently shows as to how Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi dealt with Jahangir and propagated Islam in his royal audience. Prof. Masud Ahmad rightly says that as many theological and rational problems which were explained by Shaikh Ahmad in the royal palaces, all of them were the same problems which had wrongly been interpreted in the Akbar's reign.²

In those days Jahangir sent an expedition to the fort of Kangra under the command of Sunder Das, entitled Raja Bikramajit. Some of the nobles of Jahangir such as Shahbaz Khan Lodi, Hirdai Narain Hada, Raja Prithi Chand and the son of Ram Chand are also reported have been sent with the army. Prince Khuriam himself accompanied the expedition. The Kangra Fort was conquered after a siege of fourteen months, on 1st Muharram 1030/16th November 1620.³ It is remarkable that before going to the Kangra expedition Raja Bikramajit

1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.43.

2. Sirat-i-Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani, p.205.

3. It may be noted that Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was interested in the conquest of Kangra Fort from the very beginning. When in March 1615, Jahangir appointed Nawab Murtuza Khan, (Shaikh Farid Bukhari), the then governor of Punjab, to lead an expedition against the Kangra Fort, Shaikh Ahmad heard this with great jubilation. In one of his letters he once wrote to Murtuza Khan, "Every has some desire in his heart. But my desire is that the enemies of God and the Holy Prophet should be dealt with severely. I know very

had sought the blessings of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. The

f.note contd. from prev.

well that no other action is more laudable before God than this one. That is why. I repeatedly urge you to do this act. I consider the performance of this duty as one of the most important obligations of Islam. Since you have personally gone there (Kangra) and have been deputed to condemn and insult that dirty place and its inhabitants, first you should thank Almighty God because a large number of people go there for pilgrimage and to pay homage to that place and to its inhabitants. We must thank Almighty God that He did not assign us to this calamitous fate, i.e. the idol worship. After offering thanks of this great boon, we should strive hard to insult and condemn these wretches and their false gods. We should make attempt, whether openly or secretly, for their destruction. Their chiselled or unchiselled idols should be insulted or unchiselled idols should be insulted in all manners and in all ways. It is expected that some of your lapses shall be compensated for by this achievement and shall be a cause of the atonement of them. As I am unable to come to you on account of my physical weakness and excessive otherwise. I would have come to persuade you personally to do this act". (See Maktubat, Vol. I, Letter No.269).

It may also be noted that Murtuza Khan could not be success in this expedition to Kangra and subsequently he died in 1616. (Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin, Vol. I, p.146). The Hazarat-ul-Quds states that when Nawab Saiyyid Murtuza Khan was deputed to conquer the Kangra Fort, he sent a petition to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and requested him to pray for his victory. The Shaikh told his disciples the very next day that he meditated on the matter in the morning and was spiritually informed that the fort could not be conquered by Murtuza Khan. The same reply was despatched to him (to Murtuza Khan). Shortly afterwards the news reached that the Saiyyid had passed away and the fort could not be conquered. (See p.178).

N.B. - As far as the history of the expeditious against the Kangra Fort is concerned, it appears that first of all it was invaded by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in 1009. After a long period of three centuries Muhammad bin Tughlaq undertook an expedition against it in 1337. The ruler of Kangra offered resistance and the fort could not be taken. Subsequently in 1363 Sultan Firuz Shah led another expedition against it but the
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author of Hazarat-ul-Ouds says, that when Raja Bikrama jit was ordered to lead the expedition against Kangra Fort, he approached the Shaikh and most humbly submitted that he was a muslim in his heart. Thereupon the Shaikh told him that if anybody became Muslim in his but outwardly he remained an infidel, he was infidel, Kafir. The Bikramajit again submitted that the Emperor had appointed him to lead an expedition against Kangra Fort which was so difficult task that even person like Nawab Murtuza Khan could not be success in his efforts. He told that he was very much anxious as to how should invade the country of fidels, dar-ul-harb. He requested the Shaikh to spiritually guide him and to forecast the conquest of the fort. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi replied, "The war against the infidels (kafirs) of dar-ul-harb is obligatory for every Muslim. When you are yourself performing. This obligatory dut and relieving -----
f.note contd. from prev.

fort remained uncaptured though its ruler agreed to pay tributed to the Sultan. Later on, Emperor Akbar also made an attempt to capture the fort. He sent an expedition in 980/1572-73 under Hasain Quli. Though he occupied the outer town but the inner citadel still held out. It was Jahangir who captured it in 1620.

ul-Auliya says that after conquest of the fact, Emperor Jahangir asked Shaikh Ahmad that if he accompanied him, he would slaughter a cow, demolish the idols, construct a mosque and propagate Islam. The Shaikh accompanied the Emperor to the Kangra Fort and Jahangir acted according to his commitment.¹

The third volume of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani contains a letter which was sent to Emperor Jahangir. Though it is difficult to trace out that from where the saint despatched this letter but it seems to have been written after the conquest of Kangra Fort because at various places in the letter he indirectly mentioned that he very much invoked God's blessings for the victory of the royal army. To quote Sirhindi, God has created any thing useless. Every thing what depends on war and struggle, help the state and the empire on which the propagation of Islam is based as our elders have said the Shariat is under the wielding of sword. The army of blessings (lashkar-i-dua) which consist of the pious persons, performs the same duty as the victory is of two types . On which belongs to worldly conquest and depends upon army and battle. The other kind of victory is the reality of worldly conquest and it directly links with god,

1. Majma-ul-Auliya (MS.), f.443a.

others from it, then how I would not pray for your. "When Raja Bikramajit found the Shaikh so considerate, he began to entreat still more persistently and submitted that he would not move until the Shaikh would give him good tidings of victory. The saint repeated the words he had uttered earlier. The Raja again requested with great humility. When Shaikh Ahmad found him unsatisfied, he meditated for a while and said, "Victory is certainly years, you need not worry, and go without care." Bikramajit departed from there with great humility and within a short period conquered the fact, which could not be conquered by previous suttens though they made great efforts.¹

When Emperor Jahangir reached Kangra,² Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is reported to accompanied him. It is said that he had requested the saint for the same. The author of Majma-

1. Hazarat-ul-Quds, pp.178-79.
2. On reaching Kangra Fort, alongwith Qazi, Mir Adl, and other learned persons of Islam, Jahangir ordered whatever was customary according to the religion of the Holy Prophet to be carried out there. He writes in his tuzuk, "Briefly, having traversed about one kos I reached the top of the fort and by the Grace of God, the call to prayer, and the reading of the khutba and the slaughter of cow etc., which had not ever been performed these, were carried or in my presence. I prostrated myself for thanking Almighty God for this great gift which no king had hoped to receive, and order to build a lofty mosque inside the fort (See, p.340).

the causer of causes (musabbibul asbab). The Quran says, There is no help except what is from God. I mean the same victory which belongs to the army of blessings. Accordingly despite its insult and humiliation, it (the army of blessings - lashkar-i-dua) preceded the army of battle and war and linked the matter with God.

"The invocations and benediction break the calamities as the Holy Prophet has said that nothing except invocation could turn said the calamity. The sword and the war have no power to prevent calamities. Hence, the lashkar-i-dua, despite its weakness and humility, is more powerful than the army of war. The army of invocation and blessings is like spirit whereas the army of war is like body. So both of them are essential for each other because body is useless without the support of spirit. The ulama of Islam have said that the Holy Prophet would invoke God's blessings, despite huge army, by means (wasila) by pious persons and those who migrated to Madina (from Mecca) with him (muhajirin). Accordingly, the pious persons who form the army of invocation, lashkar-i-due, apart from their insult, humiliation and bad condition, prove very useful at the time need and necessities. They gain people's trust and confidence and take precedence among all. The Holy Prophet says that the blood of the martyres will be weighed with the

ink of the ulama and the second one will be more weighty than the first one.

"Though this humble person doest not find himself capable to be counted in lashkar-i-dua, yet he is not all free from the invocation of blessings. He regards himself as one of the well-wishers of your empire and prays for your prosperity."¹ The saint's words that the army of invocations and blessings preceded the army of battle and war and connected it with god, is an open indication that the letter was written after the victory over Kangra Fort. Moreover, the latter also throws light on Shaikh Ahmad's relations with Jahangir.²

Any how, Sirhindi continued his journey alongwith the

1. Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No.47.
2. Commenting on the saint's letter to Emperor Jahangir, a modern scholar writes that it was just in the form of a congratulatory petition and not in response to any of the Emperor's letters. He further says that it was written on an occasion when every one could freely show his loyalty and devotion to the Emperor. (See S.A.A. Rizvi, Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India, Agra, 1965, p.306). Rizvi's view seems incorrect as the letter does not reveal any type of the saint's loyalty or devotion to the Emperor. It clearly shows the superiority of religious affairs over wordly matters. The saint did not at all mention any praise for the royal army.

royal army and insited various places in the Mughal.¹ During this period he sent a number of letter to his sons, friends and followers. It appears that on some occasion his sons Khwaja Muhammad Saeed and Khwaja Muhammad Masum also joined him. In a letter to Khwaja Husamuddin, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi writes that his sons and friends are with him and all of them are working for the propagation of Islamic Laws. to quote the letter, "Praise be to God, who is keeping us very satisfied in troubles and afflictions. Sons and friends, who are staying with me, mostly spend their time in offering prayers. They are fully satisfied and their spiritual condition is day by day increasing and developing. The royal camp (laskar) is like a khangah for them. They feel satisfaction even they are surrounded by royal soldiers....".² Later on, Shaikh Ahmad's son left him for Sirhind.³

1. He also went to Banaras but the time of his arrival in this town and the period of his stay over there is not known. The Rauizat-ul-Qaiyyumiya mentions that Shaikh had refused to drink the water brought from the river Ganges. (See, Urdu Translation, p.209). Also see Zawwar Husain, op.cit., p.35.

2. Maktubat, Vol.III, Letter No.72.

3. Ibid, Letter No.78.

It appears that during the subsequent period Shaikh himself visited Sirhind¹ as it was in or around 1031/1621 that Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, the author of Zubdat-ul-Maqamat called on him at the very same place and became his disciple.²

Finally Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and the royal army encamped in Ajmer.³ It appears that the saint remained there for long time - from Ramazan 1031/ July 1622⁴ to the beginning of 1033/ 1623-24.⁵ During the whole period of his stay at Ajmer Shaikh Ahmad spent his time mostly in offering prayers and meditations. It also appears that Khwaja Muhammad Hashim was also staying with his spiritual

1. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya (Urdu), p.209.
Huzrat Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani, p.35.
N.B. - Both these works state that Emperor Jahangir accompanied the royal army and the Shaikh to Sirhind. It is also reported that before or after the visit of Kashmir, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and the royal army and even the emperor encamped in Lahore, Delhi and Banaras as well.
2. See Preface of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani, Vol.III, Also, Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.3.
3. Letter No.85 of the maktubat, Vol. III reveals the Shaikh's departure for Ajmer from some unknown place.
4. Maktubat, Vol. III (Istanbul Edition), p.605.
5. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, (Urdu), p.216.

mentor at Ajmer.¹ Mean while, Shaikh Adam Banuri also joined Ahmad's mystic discipline and received khilafat from him.² In very those days the ulama of Balkh and Transoxiana studied the maktubat of the Shaikh and were highly impressed. They therefore sent their representatives to the Shaikh with their best wishes and compliments.³ Similarly a renowned alim came to India from Balkh and called on the Shaikh in Ajmer. He conveyed the message of eminent ulama and mystics of the region such as Mir Kushad, Shaikh Qadeem Kubrawi, Mir Momin Balkhi, Maulana Hasan Qiyadiani and Maulana Tawalluk. The messenger, who himself was a noted scholar and sufi, is reprinted to have kissed Shaikh Ahmad's hands, obtained his blessings and sought his spiritual guidance. At his departure, Sirhindi gave him a letter for Mir Momin Balakhi in which he exhorted his followers in Afghanistan and Central Asia to strictly follow the Shariat⁴. In 1031/1621, the third volume of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani was compiled by Khwaja Muhammad Hashim

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1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.282/Muktubat, Vol.III, Letter No.82.
 2. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiya, p.215.
 3. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p.218.
 4. *Ibid*, pp.218-19.

Kishmi.¹

The author of Zubdat-ul-Magamat says that, during his stay at Ajmer, once in 1032/1622, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi asked him that he would survive upto sixty three years. having informed Muhammad Hashim, the Shaikh expressed his gladness that his own age would correspond the age of the Holy Prophet.² In the mean time Sirhindi experienced in very important spiritual event. Once performing meditation in the mosque of shrine of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer, he felt that something was being taken back from him and it was being given to his son Khwaja Muhammad Masum. Immediately after this episode, the Shaikh was spiritually informed that it was the robe of Qaiyyumiyat which had been back from him and given to his son.³ The saint dispatched a letter to his sons in which he described the event and mentioned his deteriorating physical condition.⁴ Subsequently, both Khwaja Muhammad Saeed and Khwaja Muhammad Masum reached Ajmer and joined his father. They stayed there

1. See the Preface of the third volume of Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani.
2. Zubdat-ul-Magamat, p.282.
3. Rauzat-ul-Qaiyyumiyah (Urdu), p.216.
Also, Maktubat, Vol. III, Letter No,104.
4. Ibid.

for some time and participated in the Shaikh's spiritual exercises.¹ The author of Zubdat-ul-Magammat says that the saint frequently visited the tomb of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti and benefited from his spiritual excellences. There he performed meditation for several hours. Once the servants of the shrine came to him and kissed his hands. They gave the chadar (Qabrposh) of the Khwaja's grave to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. It is stated in those days it was the custom that the chadar was changed every year and given either to any of the great saints or to the ruler of the time. Otherwise it was put into a box made of precious stones, But at that time it was given to Ahmad Sirhindi. The latter accepted it with respect and asked his servant to carefully keep it. According to Hashim, Shaikh Ahmad drew a deep sigh and said no other cloth was near to the Khwaja than that. He also said that it should be preserved for his coffin.² Hashim Kishmi also says that in the subsequent night he heard a voice from the Shaikh's room. When he came near, he saw that the Shaikh was weeping and reiterating a Persian verse.³

1. Zubdat-ul-Magammat, p.282.

2. Ibid., pp.283-84.

3. Ibid., p.284.

CHAPTER-VIII
LAST DAYS AND DEATH

CHAPTER VIII

LAST DAYS AND DEATH

Muhammad Hashim Kishmi has described Sirhindi's daily routine and the regular worship in detail. According to him, Shaikh Ahmad strictly followed the Shariat and performed all the religious rituals according to the Quranic ordinances and the traditions of the Holy Prophet. If by chance, he committed any error, he at once repented and invoked the blessings of God. He always listened to the recitation of the verses from the Quran sitting on the floor.¹

As born hanafite, at times he followed other schools, the Shafite, the Hambalite and the Malikite. As according to Imam Abu Hanifa, a devout (namazi) need not repeat the opening chapter of the Quran, i.e. Surah-i-Fatihe, behind the Imam (one who leads the prayer), Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi generally followed the Hanafite school but sometimes he performed his prayers according to the teachings of other Imams as they are in favour of repetition. To avoid the controversy he generally himself led the congregational prayers. Similarly when he visited any grave, he recited the

1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp. 193-95.

verses of the Quran but sometimes he dispensed with it as Abu Hanifa does not approve this action whereas other schools consider it desirable.¹ Performing the ablution, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi always turned his face to the Qibla, i.e. the Kaba and when he washed his feet, he changed the side.²

He got up just at mid night, performed ablution and offered the tahajjud prayer (the namaz offered after mid night). Just before the sun rise Shaikh Ahmad said his morning prayer in his mosque situated in the premises of the Khanqah. After fajr he turned the beads of rosary, reciting the litanies. Thereafter, he performed meditation (the maragabah) for some time. Later on, he met his family members and inquired about their problems and necessities. He took his breakfast there and spent some time amongst them. Then he sat alone and recited the Quran, and having done it, he taught his students.³ All his disciples, students and companions are reported to have joined his discourses with full attention and devotion.⁴ He had his lunch before the noon prayer and recited the Quran after

1. Ibid, pp. 196-98.

2. Ibid, p. 198

3. Ibid, p. 199

4. Ibid, pp. 200-201

offering Zuhr. He offered his afternoon prayer just after the time began and then he meditated with his companions for half an hour.¹

As the prayer of maghrib (just after sun set) was over, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi loudly recited the Kalima, i.e. the declaration of faith. Having offered the night prayer and completed all the Wazaif, Sirhindi went to his bed. On Monday and Friday nights, he repeatedly recited the durud, i.e. invoked God's blessings and peace for the Holy Prophet.² He offered the congregational Friday prayer in the main mosque of Sirhind whereas the prayers of Id-ul Fitr, the festival on the eve of the completion of Ramazan, fasts, and Id-ul-Azha, the festival of sacrifice at Mecca, were offered in his own mosque. During the first ten days of the month Zil-Hijjah, Shaikh Ahmad neither shaved his head nor cut the nails. He showed great humility and humbleness in his prayers.³ Sometimes he visited the graveyards of the town and prayed for the deads. Previously he would kiss his father's grave but later he gave up this practice.⁴

1. Ibid, pp. 2020-203

2. Ibid, pp. 205-206

3. Ibid, pp. 206-209.

4. Ibid, p. 210

Khwaja Hashim Kishmi says that during those days Shaikh Ahmad spent his time mostly in his own house and usually did not come out except for the purpose of offering five time namaz and the congregational Friday prayer. His sons and three or four other followers were allowed to see him inside the house.¹ In the meantime Hashim Kishmi sought his master's permission to depart to Burhanpur in order to look after his family. The Shaikh permitted him return with deep sorrow. When Kishmi asked him to invoke for their next meeting in the near future, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi drew a sigh and said, "I invoke that we may gather in the hereafter." The words caused great sorrow and grief to Khwaja Hashmi. Any how he left for Burhappur.²

In Sha'ban 1033 A.H./ May 1624 A.D., Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi confined himself to a particular place in his house. Now he appeared out side only on Friday to offer the weekly congregation wherease daily five times prayers were performed inside the home alongwith some devout followers, and his own sons.³ Both Khwaja Hashim Kishmi and Maulana

1. Zabdat-ul-Maqamat, p. 284.

2. Ibid, pp. 284-85

3. Badruddin Sirhindi; Wisal-i-Ahmad, Siyalkot, 1396/1976, p.4

Badruddin Sirhindi say that the Shaikh in those days reiterated a Hindi verse; (Today I will meet my beloved; Oh friend I scarifice the whole world on this happy occasion)¹ The Wisal-i-Ahmadi states that in 1033 A.H./ 1624 A.D., near about six months before his death, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi wrote a letter to some Sadiq Khan in which he recommended a needy person. The treatise contains the letter. He writes, "you should know that since the Emperor has released me and departed from the royal camp, I have been leading a secluded life. By God's grace I am passing my time with great satisfaction. As there occurs a natural calamity in this city, it seems that I may not survive this year. Be you pleased and happy."² When his seclusion completed six or seven months, the asthamatic decease, which would attach Ahmad Sirhindi every year in winter, started to attack him again. He also suffered from high fever on 17th Zil Hijjah 1033/20th September 1624. It is reported that in the night he felt great weakness. Afterwards he recovered to some extent. later on, his condition was again serious. On 12th Muharram 1034 / 15th October 1624 he indicated the place of

1. Ibid, p.6

2. Ibid, p.8

N.B. - But no volume of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani contains this letter.

his grave.¹ But once again his condition increased and he went to mosque to offer namaz, On 22nd Safar 1034/ 24th November 1624 he asked his attendants that there would occur some great event with the next ten days. The Next morning he distributed garments (Qaba) to his followers same he once again suffered from very high fever, He therefore went to bed but he usually got up for offering Tahujjud, He is said to have stated that it was his last mid-night prayer² He asked some Hafiz Abdur Rashid to bring coal of one rupee from the market and to burn them for creating heat.³ Despite his deteriorating physical condition, the Shaikh did not miss any of his prayers and litanies. He exhorted his followers, sons and wife, and gave them indications for his funeral etc. He asked them to perform every rite and ritual in accordance with the rules of Shariat. He said to his wife that very soon he would depart from her and she, therefore, should spend her own money for his coffin etc. He also desired to be buried either at any unknown place or near the grave of his father. But on his sons' submission he left the matter to them.⁴

1. Wisal-i-Ahmadi, p.10

2. Ibid, pp. 11-12

3. Ibid, pp. 12-13.

4. Ibid, pp. 15-16

The Shaikh died on Tuesday 28th Safar 1034 / 30th November 1624 in the morning between the sun rise and the meridian.¹ The last words occurred by him were about namaz.² The Shaikh's dead body was washed and shrouded in accordance with the Shariat. Khwaja Muhammad Saeed, the elder son of the Shaikh, led the funeral prayer of his illustrious father as well as spiritual mentor. The dead body was buried in a tomb, near the mosque inside the saint's own khangah, where his eldest son Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq already lied buried. A number of supernatural events (karamat) are alleged to have occurred at the time of Ahmad Sirhindi's death.³

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1. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, p. 290 Wisat-i-Ahmadi, pp. 17-18.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, pp. 293-94 Wisat-i-Ahmadi, p. 18

CHAPTER-IX

IMPACT OF SHAIKH AHMAD ON INDO-MUSLIM MYSTIC IDEOLOGY

CHAPTER IX

IMPACT OF SHAIKH AHMAD ON INDO-MUSLIM MYSTIC IDEOLOGY

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was a great personality of the Mughal in India. His thought and religio-mystical activities not only influenced his contemporaries but left deep impact upon the posterity. It is the clear evidence of his greatness and importance that for about four hundred year he has been one of the most esteemed spiritual personality among the Muslims of the Sub-continent in particular and the Muslims of the world in general. A number of works were produced on him in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, English and other languages by highlighting his biography, mystical concepts, religious thought and his role as a sufi and alim in the then religio political environment, and even still the efforts are being made in this direction.

Born in a very religious sufi and scholarly family of Sirhind Shaikh Ahmad, like his revered father, Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi, started his career as a staunch alim and stayed for many years at Agra, the then capital of the Mughal empire, where he came into contact with ulama, sufis and scholars, There, he on one hand came to know, the spiritual and scholarly setup of the society, on the other, he studied

the deteriorating condition of the thought processes of Muslim religious class. At Agra Ahmad Sirhindi also acquainted himself with the eminent nobles and officials of the Mughal Court. His association with the ruling class provided him with an opportunity to minutely observe the situation at the royal court, especially Akbar's and his companions hostile attitude towards Islam and the Muslims. This is because, he raised opposition against Akbar's religious experiments and his attempt to assume religious leadership. He severely attacked Akbar by compiling a treatise Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat. In this connection he produced another brochure Radd-i-Rawafiz which refutes Shia faith and indicates Shia influence at the Mughal court. Sirhindi always looked upon the rulers as 'all soul' and the people as 'all body'. According to him if the soul went wrong, the body was bound to go astray. He declared, "The King's being on the right path means that the world is on the right path; his waywardness is waywardness of the whole world". During the closing years of Akbar's reign, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi started correspondence with a number of Mughal rulers, like Nawab Murtuza Khan Shaikh Farid Bukhari, Khan-i-Azam, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, Darab Khan, Lala Beg and Badiuzaman etc., and exhorted them to use their influence in changing the atmosphere of the court and put an end to the 'heretical innovations' which were percolating through the court. We

have seen that these nobles played important role in the occasion of Jahangir. The latter's gradual deviation from Akbar's religious policies cannot be denied in any respect. Jahangir's open support to Islamic norms and the Shariat clearly indicates Ahmad Sirhindi's political role in the Mughal politics. Sources reveal that he was completely successful in this direction.

So far as the mystical aspect of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is concerned, it is appropriate to say that he reconciled Sufism with the Shariat and asked the sufis to base their ideas and practices on Kitab-wa-Sunnah, i.e. the Quran and the Hadith. However, his chief contribution to the sufi thought was his enunciation of the theory of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud, unity of Appearance. He disclosed through this ideology that the experience of Wahdat-ul-Wujud, unity of being, which the mystic acquires at a certain stage of his spiritual development is only subjective; it is not the experience of objective fact. The objective reality is different from what the mystic lies experience; and it is Wahdat-ush-Shuhud. In other words the experience of Wahadat-i-Wujud is an intermediary stage in the mystic's evolution. When he goes beyond by leaving behind this stage during his spiritual experience and attains to still higher stages, he realises that the stage of Wahdat-ul-Wujud was

merely a subjective experience; the real stage is the stage of Wahdat-ush-Shuhud. In nutshell this theory reveals the Quranic as well as the Prophetic spirit and played a significant role in bringing the mystics of Islam back to the Holy Prophet.

I Moreover, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi launched a wide spread revivalist movement by deputing his Khalifas to the important cities and town in the Mughal empire and outside the Indian frontiers. His efforts in this direction were so deeply effective that it influenced not only the common people, ulama, sufis and scholars of the time but got his religious mission introduced at the Mughal Court as well. A gradual change in the religious life and attitude of the Mughal rulers cannot be contradicted. The results of Sirhindi's revivalist efforts were undoubtedly far reaching and durable. Even after several decades, Shaikh Ahmad's influence and greatness are evidently seen in the annals of Islam in Indian sub-continent.

APPENDIX-A
CHRONOLOGY

APPENDIX-A

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF SHAIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI

- 971 A.H./1564 A.D. Birth of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi in Sirhindi on Friday, 14th Shawwal/26th May.
- 972 A.H./1564-65 A.D. Shaikh Abdun Nabi was appointed as Sadr-us-Sudur.
- 977/1569-70 Birth of Prince Saleem
- 986/1578 Foundation of the 'Ibadat Khana' at Fatehpur Sikri.
- 987/1579 Declaration of 'Mahzar' by proclaiming Akbar as supreme religious leader of the Muslim of India.
- 989/1581 Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, after completing his education started teaching at his father's seminary at Sirhindi. Beginning of the 'Din-i-Ilahi'.
- 990/1582 Shaikh Ahmad's arrival at Agra.
- 991/1583 Sirhindi's meeting with Abul Fazl. 'Ilahi Era' was introduced
- 992/1584 Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi held polemical discussion held polemical discussion with Abul Fazl.
- Compilation of the Ithbat-un-Nabuwwat.
- 998/1589-90 Shaikh Ahmad's father Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi reached Agra to take his son back to Sirhindi.
- Shaikh Ahmad left Agra for his native town.

In the way they stayed at Thanesar, met Shaikh Sultan Thanesari and the latter married his daughter to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

- 999/1590 Shaikh Ahmad's arrival and permanent stay at Sirhind.
- 1000/1591-92 Compilation of the treatise Radd-i-Rawafiz.
- Birth of Shaikh Ahmad's eldest son Muhammad Sadiq.
- 1005/1596-97 Birth of Khwaja Muhammad Ma'sum, the second son of the Shaikh.
- 1006/1597-98 Shaikh Ahmad's father conferred upon his son the Khalifat and authorised him to initiate disciples into the Chichtiya and Qadiriya silsilahs.
- 1007/1598-99 Khwaja Muhammad Saeed, the third son of Shaikh Ahmad, was born in Sirhind.
- Compilation of the Risalah-i-Tahliliya. Death of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's father, Shaikh Abdul Ahad Faruqi.
- 1008/1599-1600 Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi left Sirhindi with intention of Haji and reached Delhi where he stay with his school days' friend Maulana Hasan Kashmiri. The latter introduced him to Khwaja Baqi Billah, who had recently settled down in Delhi and earned great fame among the inhabitants.
- Shaikh Ahmad called on Khwaja Baqi Billah at his Khanqah, joined his mystic discipline and received khilafat from him into the Naqshbandi silsilah.

After spending few months Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi gave up the ida of Haji and returned to Sirhind, and started correspondence with his pir.

Death of Maulana Khwajgi Amkangi, Khwaja Baqi Billah's spiritual preceptor.

1000/1600-1

Shaikh Ahmad's second visit to his pir at Delhi and stay with him for four months. On his return, Khwaja Baqi Billah asked some of his disciples to accompany the Shaikh to Sirhindi for obtaining spiritual training under him. 'Sadr-i-Jahan' and 'Khan-i-Azam' joined Shaikh Ahmad's fold.

1012/1603-4

Sirhindi visited Baqi Billah third time. The latter received his khalifa very warmly at the door Delhi. He also declared Shaikh Ahmad as his Chief successor.

Sirhindi's arrival at Lahore and meeting with the eminent ulama and mashaikh. A larger of the Muslims joined his mystical disciplines.

Death of Khwaja Baqi Billah at Delhi.

Shaikh Ahmad reach Delhi and joined his master's funeral.

1014/1605

Death of Akbar.
Jahangir ascended the throne of the Mughal empire.
Shaikh Farid Bukhari was conferred upon with the title 'Murtuza Khan'.

1016/1607-8

Shaikh Ahmad visited Delhi with his son Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq.

1019/1610

Compilation of the 'Mabda'-wa-Ma'ad'.

1025/1616

Compilation of the first volume of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani.

Plague spread in Sirhind and Shaikh Ahmad's eldest son Khwaja Muhammad Sadiq died at the age of twenty five. Sirhindi's two more sons, Muhammad Farrukh and Muhammad Isa, and his daughter Um'-i-Kulthum' also died by becoming victim of the plague epidemic.

Death of Shaikh Farid Bukhari.

1026/1617

Compilation of Ma'arif-i-Laduniya

1028/1619

The second volume of the Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani was compiled.

Jahangir summoned Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi to his royal Court at Agra and order to be imprisoned him in the Gwalior fort.

1029/1620

Release of the Shaikh. His meeting with Jahangir who gave him the role of honour and rupees one thousand.

Shaikh Ahmad joined the royal army at Jahangir's insistence.

1030/1620-21

Sirhindi visited Allahabad.

1031/1622

Shaikh Ahmad's arrival at Ajmer and stay at the dargah of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti.

Compilation of the Mukashifat-i-Ainiya. Jahangir granted two thousand rupees to the Shaikh. Hashim Kishmi met and became disciple of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

1032/1622-23

Shaikh Ahmad finally reached and permanently stayed at Sirhind.

Jahangir visited Sirhind to meet the Shaikh.

1033/1623

Compilation of the third volume of the Maktubat by Khwaja Muhammad Hashim Kishmi.

1034/1624

Death of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

1037/1627

The Zubdat-ul-Maqamat, the detailed biography of the Shaikh, was completed by Khwaja Hashim Kishmi.

APPENDIX-B
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APPENDIX-B

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